

# GROOVE

KOREA  
Issue 68, June 2012

LEARNING TO LIVE  
BETWEEN

## TWO WORLDS

AUTHOR KRY'S LEE SHARES HER STORY

TAKE ME  
HOME

COUNTRY ROADS

READJUSTING TO LIFE BACK HOME AFTER A  
LONG STINT IN KOREA

INDIE:

WHEN DID IT  
BECOME A BAD WORD?

THE SENSATIONAL STORY OF

LILLY LEE

SHE'S ONE OF MANY IMMIGRANT WOMEN  
YET HER JOURNEY HERE WAS ANYTHING  
BUT TYPICAL

5 THINGS YOU HAVE TO DO  
THIS SUMMER

GO ISLAND HOPPING, CLIMB A MOUNTAIN AND MORE





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Vievis Namuh Hospital  
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### WOMEN'S HOSPITALS

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•Woman's Clinic Luce

### DERMATOLOGY

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 CU Cleanup Dermatology (Samsung)  
 Chois Total Beauty Clinic  
 Leader's Dermatology Clinic

S&U Dermatology Clinic  
 Modelo Skin Clinic  
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 Kim Jong-seo Plastic Surgery  
 Dream Medical Group  
 Daeyoung Plastic Surgery  
 MVP Plastic Surgery  
 Samsung Line Plastic Surgery  
 Able Plastic Surgery

LaForet Plastic Surgery  
 YK Plastic Surgery  
 OPERA Plastic Surgery  
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 IDEA Plastic Surgical Clinic  
 Jueun Plastic Surgery  
 Possom Plastic Surgery  
 JW Plastic Surgery

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 Noone Ophthalmology Hospital

Seoul Bright Ophthalmic Clinic  
 Eyemiso Ophthalmic Clinic

SL Ophthalmic Clinic  
 Seoul Bright Eye Clinic

### OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGY

Soree Ear Clinic

Yeson Voice Center

Hana ORL Clinic

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Novak Dental Clinic  
 Seoul Dental Clinic  
 S Plant Dental Clinic

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 M Dental Clinic  
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Park Avenue Dental Clinic  
 Cheongdam Su Hospital  
 Children Dental Center

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# Exploring 'home'

When I left home in 2003, people said it was an act of courage. I couldn't understand what they meant.

As a Korean adoptee who had already left home when I was adopted to the United States as a infant, returning here was a necessity and I could no longer escape.

For me, Korea was the home I'd never known and I wanted to "remember" what it was like, smell its aroma on my skin, test the language on my tongue and see what I looked like in a sea of black hair and yellow faces.

For years, I had been living a double life as a secret Asian - passing for white until I believed it, too - and in some ways I still am. Now, an immigrant in my own country, I pass for Korean until I open my mouth, and have almost convinced myself it's true, but the white girl inside I'd spent so long cultivating is still sometimes shocked when I glance over at a storefront window to see the Asian woman reflected in the glass.

But this is my home, or one of them, and it contains enough small disappointments and quiet delights to keep me interested. For now.

While my experience is unique to my identity as a Korean adoptee, questions of home are never far from the realm of any expat experience.

What is home? When do we go back and how? How do we know when we've arrived? How do we reconcile the loss of one home while building another?

Having a home can have a grounding effect, giving us the courage to take flight to places beyond our comfort zone. Not having one can be alienating, leaving us untethered and alone.

This month's issue of Groove Korea contains three very different stories of home and how we navigate the territory in between.

Our cover story is about author Kryss Lee, whose book "Drifting House" was published this year and is available in Korea. Her characters wrestle with dark secrets while drifting far from home, all the while dealing with loss, loneliness and silent horrors that test their ability to survive. As a Korean-American who splits her time between both countries, she is familiar with the complexities of being from two different worlds and her writing is steeped in the knowledge she has gained from the experience.

Lilly Lee is one of many immigrant women whose individual and ethnic identities have been subsumed by the country's rush to multiculturalism. She left her home in Burma just as the junta was cracking down and civilians were rising up. The story of how she escaped - of which this is just a part - is so incredible that she rarely tells it for fear that no one will believe her. By coming forward, she is hoping to help immigrant women like herself who are struggling to build new homes in unfamiliar surroundings.

Sometimes the true act of courage lies not in leaving home but in knowing when to go back. The decision is one every expat will confront at some point, but what matters is how you take the journey. In his account of returning home after time spent in Korea, John Rodgers debuts his column about the unfamiliar comforts he rediscovers while adjusting to his new reality.

In all of these stories, home is as much a spiritual place as a physical one and the idea of home is inextricably tied to memory and loss - places once inhabited, and the people once inhabited, too. What lies between is the knowledge that all of these things now reside within, shaping who we are and how we look at the world.



**Jenny Na**  
Community editor  
jenny@groovekorea.com

## HOT ON: www.groovekorea.com

### Insight: Understanding North Korea

Illogical. Irrational. Unpredictable. These are the kinds of words that are likely to be associated with North Korea and its dictatorial government. The infamous Kim family dynasty has been described as the world's only remaining communist monarchy and they rule over a malnourished population, commanding an enormous military funded by a broken economy. There are few countries on earth that garner as much international curiosity as North Korea, possibly because so little is understood about it. So how have three generations of Kim males maintained control for so long? Are they as irrational and unpredictable as they may seem? What is actually happening in North Korea and what does its present reality mean for its future?

Story by Luc Forsyth  
Read it online in June or in print in July

### Community: Arrival Store makes first days in Korea a breeze

Remember arriving in Korea, landing at Incheon Airport to be escorted to a lonely apartment? The fridge was empty and the bed bare. You, of course, had no phone or internet connection. Scot Sustad and Reuben Zuidhof can relate - and that prompted them to start The Arrival Store.

A one-stop shop to help newcomers get settled in Korea, The Arrival Store offers all the services they might need - and probably some they didn't know they needed. They "offer competitive prices, great products, personal service, and deliver them in an innovative and fun way."

Story by Robert McGovern  
Read it online in June or in print in July

### Music: Seoul's best under-the-radar clubs

There are places - while maybe not secrets to everyone - that we've found through simple trial and error to be the best under-the-radar clubs in the capital. If you're tired of the same old clubbing scene in Seoul - clubs that seem to play LMFAO on a loop - we have a list here that will keep you busy for many weekends. The sole commonality, besides being in Itaewon (which was just by chance), is the active approach to only playing good, noncommercial dance music. Some don't even have a dance floor. But you'll have a blast at all of them.

Story by Zachary McCullough  
Read it online in June or in print in July

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## Column: Getting down to business

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## Debut column: Staying motivated to study Korean

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## Debut column: Take me home, country roads

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For many, readjusting to life back home after years in Korea is not an easy transition. Groove Korea's Editor-at-large John M. Rodgers takes us on his journey.



## Frankensoju

Page 22

Five girls invent novel soju-based drinks. They're easy to make and colorful - just don't cut your lip on the Green Bling's broken-glass cup.

## Gobble n' Go

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## Recipe: Jarred peaches

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Krys Lee has become one of the biggest young authors in the United States. Her debut "Drifting House" will stay with you long after you put the book down. Over the course of several interviews and photo shoots, Groove Korea gets to know the person behind the stories.

## When did "indie" become a bad word?

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## 5 things you have to do this summer

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## Destination: Phu Quoc, Vietnam

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Here's a bit of advice: Planning a trip a week before monsoon season is not a good idea. Don't listen to travel agents: They're only after your money.

## The sensational story of Lilly Lee

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Lilly Lee is one of many immigrant woman who have come to Korea to start a life away from home. Her journey here was anything but typical.

## Brial Aylward's Korean comeback

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Aylward brings his stand-up act back to Korea with a string of shows from Busan up to Seoul. He was a Groove Korea columnist before moving back to Canada.

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## MUST READS

### Surviving between two worlds

Page 32

Krys Lee has become one of the biggest young authors in the United States. Her debut "Drifting House" – stories of people torn between their past and present – will stay with you long after you put the book down. Over the course of several interviews and photo shoots, Groove Korea finds out what makes her tick.



### DJ Justin Oh fills the clubs

Page 86

Justin Oh is one of the fastest rising and most exciting new talents to emerge from South Korea. His music has caught the attention of world-class DJ Paul Oakenfold, who labeled Oh's song, "Wait For You," one of the top tracks of 2011.



### A journey of rediscovery

Page 20

One week Groove Korea's Editor-at-Large John R. Rodgers was weaving his way through Seoul traffic; the next he found himself chopping wood in northern New Hampshire. After five years of living on the Korean peninsula, he now must rediscover his homeland.



### Celebrating belly dancers in Asia

Page 52

Korea-based belly dancer Eshe is organizing the first annual Asia Raqs International Bellydance Festival, a celebration of belly dancers in Asia. "I want to come together as sisters without competition and share our passion."



### 5 things you have to do this summer

Page 32

Avoid another summer of A/C and Xbox. A solid mix of adventure and laziness is key to an enjoyable Korean summer: explore mountains, drink at Family Mart, relax by the beach and navigate West Sea islands.



## The INBOX

What's on your mind? Share your thoughts on a Groove article: Did you love it? Did it suck? Are you planning a charity concert and want to spread the word? Let us know on our Facebook page or Twitter and we'll print it here. This is your page — get your message out!

Facebook it; tweet it; e-mail it to [submissions@groovekorea.com](mailto:submissions@groovekorea.com)



WEBSITE

RE: Seoul's alternative cinemas

Thanks for this great article. I used to love stuff like this back home. Can't wait for the weekend to check some of these places out.

— Jessi Milton

RE: In the shadow of Gangnam

Great piece. You always have interesting articles on Korea. Keep it up.

— Anonymous

RE: In the shadow of Gangnam

Korea has one of the highest wealth disparities in the OECD. This kind of poverty does exist here – it's just hidden very well. Travel outside of Seoul by car and you can see these mini-slums on the sides of hills all over the place. People forget that half of this country still has an average per capita income of under \$10,000. Yes, the average income is \$20,000 per year, but that is pulled way up by the super rich.

Ever wonder why there are so many demonstrations, why so many people are disgruntled? There is almost no social safety net. Korea has to spend more money on social programs.

— Oliver Henrique



FACEBOOK

Pet needs home

The time has come, sadly, for me to begin looking for a new home for my beloved hedgehog Ooyu. If anyone knows of someone interested in an adorable hedgehog for a companion, please have them get a hold of me.

— Jillian Nellwyn Robbins

Open mic

Check out Itaewon Open Mic every Thursday at Bar Ireland Yuki. Singing, rapping, poetry, dance, freestyle, comedy, acting, musical instrument, spoken word and more. Artists have to register by 8:30 p.m. For more info, e-mail [itaewonopenmic@gmail.com](mailto:itaewonopenmic@gmail.com).

— Jeremy Rondell



FEEDBACK

Good work

Congrats on the last few issues of the magazine - you've evolved to become an outlet for some really good articles!

— Tracie Barrett

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# CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Introducing the illustrators behind this month's Groove Korea.



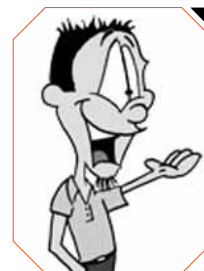
**Larry Rodney**  
Canada

Larry Rodney was living in Japan in the mid-'90s when he created the character Charisma Man with his friend Glen Schroeder as illustrator. The strip first appeared in the expat humor magazine The Alien in 1998, and since then has gone on to become well-known among expats and travelers in Asia. Larry now lives in his native city, Vancouver. Larry has adapted the Charisma Man comic strip for Groove Korea.

**Patrick Graham**  
Canada



Patrick is a Canadian claiming the back woods as his home. An avid artist, Patrick loves drawing comics and playing the guitar. When he isn't drawing, he enjoys getting out and enjoying as many outdoor activities as possible, including football and convenience store patio parties. He enjoys good makgeolli, food and long, inspiring walks on the beach. Patrick contributes the Kimchi Confessions comic every month.



**Luke Martin**  
Canada

Luke Martin is an American comic artist based in Chicago. He wrote ROKetship from 2008 to 2010 while living and teaching in Seoul. ROKetship was published regularly in over 10 magazines, newspapers and online publications throughout Korea and resulted in a book collection. Luke is a former president of the Cartoonists Northwest Association and still counts pajeon as one of his favorite foods. Luke contributes the ROKetship comic every month.

**Jen Lee**  
USA



Jen Lee is a Korean-American residing in Gwangju. She is the creator and artist behind Dear Korea, a comic about living abroad in South Korea. She is currently working at an animation company as a 2D/3D artist, and spends whatever free time she has to improve as an artist. Outside of art, she enjoys cooking, sleeping and losing herself in a good movie or video game. Jen contributes the Dear Korea comic strip every month.



**Adela Ordoñez**  
Honduras

Adela is an illustrator/designer from San Pedro Sula, Honduras. She is currently studying and living in Costa Rica. Aside from her newfound love of Korean culture, Adela loves traveling, world culture and drawing. See her portfolio at aordonez.carbonmade.com. Adela is responsible for the beautiful illustrations in the Insight section.

# On the COVER

**Krys Lee**

Krys Lee has become one of the biggest young authors in the United States. Her debut "Drifting House" – stories of people torn between their past and present – will stay with you long after you put the book down. Over the course of several interviews and photo shoots, Groove Korea finds out what makes her tick.

See the full story on Page 32



Cover photo by Duk-Hwa  
Design by Daniel Sanchez

## Our past three issues:



**May 2012**  
SuperColorSuper.  
Yeosu Expo 2012. In The  
Shadow of Gangnam.



**April 2012**  
Out with God. Cherry  
Blossom festivals & Korea's  
Stressed Masses



**March 2012**  
Ballons of Hope for  
North Korea. The Expat  
Apartment Project.

Check out our past issues at:  
[www.groovekorea.com](http://www.groovekorea.com)



# This month's EVENTS

June 1<sup>st</sup> - June 30<sup>th</sup>

\*All the events published in this calendar are subject to unforeseen changes by the promoters. Groove Korea does not take responsibility for any misunderstandings or third party damage.

For suggestions or comments email Matthew Lamers:  
mattlamers@groovekorea.com

## Event of the month

Groove Korea's cover story this month is on new literary sensation Kryz Lee. Join her at What the Book in Itaewon on June 16 for a reading of her book "Drifting House."

PINK INDICATES A FESTIVAL, HOLIDAY OR  
SOMETHING AWESOME

Friday  
1

- Festival: **Haeundae Sand Festival in Busan; June 1-4; sandfestival.haeundae.go.kr**
- Music: Hologram Film, Fantastic Drugstore, 24 Hours @ Club FF in Hongdae
- Beer: All-you-can-drink beer @ Pho Mons in Gangnam; 4,900 won for 2 hours; (02) 514-0513

Sunday  
3

- Musical: Elisabeth Das Musical in Daegu; June 2-9; www.kmuartcenter.kr
- Exhibit: "Seoul in Turbulence, as seen by the AP" @ Seoul Museum of History; last day; www.museum.seoul.kr
- Tour: Royal Asiatic Society Korea Branch excursion in Gunsan, North Jeolla Province; 8 am; rackb.com

Tuesday  
5

- Festival: **Daegu Flower Show in Daegu; June 5-10; www.flowerdaegu.kr**
- Tour: Ansan Market tour with Seoul International Women's Association; 10 am; www.siwapage.com
- Food: 2 For 1 fish & chips @ Wolfhound (Tuesdays); wolfhoundpub.com

Thursday  
7

- Expo: International Food Industry Exhibition in Daegu; June 7-10; www.excodeaegu.co.kr
- Festival: **Yeosu Expo; to Aug. 12; http://www.worldexpo2012.com**
- Exhibit: Mayumi Terada's Living Absence @ Museum of Photography; through June 9; see Exhibits page in Arts section

Saturday  
2

- Social: Community Korea Social Party in Gangnam @ 7 p.m.; www.communitykorea.com
- Little Travellers Photo Scavenger Hunt @ City Hall; 1:30 pm; see Facebook for more info
- Festival: **Korea Queer Festival to June 2; www.kqcf.org**

Monday  
4

- Food: Wing Night @ Yaletown in Sinchon (Mondays); 400 won/wing; (02) 333-1604
- Food: Ongoing: Fish Market Tour, Vegan Taste Tour, Night Dining Tour; ongofood.com
- Exhibit: Veronica Bailey's Modern Myths @ Gaain Gallery; through June 8; see Exhibits page in the Arts section

Wednesday  
6

- Music: Jason Mraz in Busan @ Bexco; 8 p.m.
- Beer: Beer buffet @ 200 Bran Hauns; 9,900 won; Mon-Thurs, Sunday; 5 p.m.; (02) 3481-9062
- Tour: Spectacular Buddhist Ceremony at Bongwon-sa; 10 am; www.siwapage.com

Friday  
8

- Beer: All-you-can-drink beer @ Ssada! Maeck Ju in Hongdae; 8,000 won ; (02) 3141-7011
- Exhibit: Debbie Han's Modernity of the Eye @ GoEun Museum, Busan; through June 10; see Exhibits page in the Arts section

Saturday  
9

- Festival: **Latin American Festival @ SeongBuk Stream; Han-sung Univ. Station, exit 2**
- Music: Galaxy Express @ Sangsang Madang; 5 p.m.; www.sangsangmadang.com
- Music: Jazz Pianist Song Young-joo @ Mapo Art Center; 7 pm; www.mapoartcenter.or.kr

Monday  
11

- Social: **New to Seoul? Check out the Seoul International Women's Association meeting @ M-plaza Seoul Global Cultural Center; 10:30 am; siwapage.com**
- Info: Free shuttle bus Seoul-Jeonju every day except Monday; Seoul departure 8 a.m.; Jeonju Departure 5 p.m.; visitkorea@chestours.co.kr

Wednesday  
13

- Social: Quiz night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong (Wednesdays); http://craftworkstaphouse.com
- Exhibit: A Conglomerate @ Aalto Café, downtown Cheonan; through June 24; see Exhibits page in the Arts section

Friday  
15

- Festival: **Daegu International Musical Festival; June 15-July 9**
- Music: G'OLD ("Good-Old") Korea Vinyl Mixtape @ Bar Exit; http://goldkoreavinyl.com
- Exhibit: White Future: Thinking of Nuclear @ GoEun Museum, Busan; through June 24; see Exhibits page in the Arts section

Sunday  
17

- Festival: **Asia Raqs International Bellydance Festival @ Dream Dance Studio; June 15-17; asiarraqs.wordpress.com**
- Russian lessons: 2-4 p.m. every Sunday @ Seoul Global Village Center, Myeongdong; aruskor.org
- Self-help: AA meeting @ International Lutheran Church; 5 pm

Tuesday  
19

- Festival: **Hansan Ramie Fabric Cultural Festival; June 19-21; www.seocheon.go.kr**
- Workshop: Spring Detox Workshop; June 19-27 @ Wellbeing Studio in Itaewon; www.wellbeingstudio.com

Thursday  
21

- Social: Open mic @ Orange Tree in HBC (Thursdays); (02) 749-8202
- Social: Open mic @ Bar Yuki Ireland (Thursdays); artists register by 8:30; itaewonopenmic@gmail.com

Saturday  
23

- Music: Moment, Daybreak, Lala Sweet, Born Kim and more @ AX-Korea; 7 pm; http://ax-korea.co.kr
- Beer: All-you-can-drink beer/vodka @ Ark Lounge Bar in Sinchon; 5,000 won before 8 pm; (02) 325-9078

Monday  
25

- Food: Wing night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong (Mondays); http://craftworkstaphouse.com
- Exhibit: "Symphony of Light and Color" @ Asia Museum, Daejeon; through Sept 16; see Exhibits page in the Arts section

Wednesday  
27

- Food: Cheese steak sandwich night @ Hollywood Grill in Itaewon; (02) 749-1659
- Social: Standup comedy (Wednesdays) @ Tony's in Itaewon; tonysitaewon.com

Friday  
29

- Stand-up: **Comedian Brian Aylward performs @ Sharky's (Busan); brianaylward.com**
- Beer: Beer buffet @ 200 Bran Hauns; 9,900 won; Mon-Thurs, Sunday; 5 p.m.; (02) 3481-9062
- Exhibit: "TinTones - Rough Print" @ Club MOW - Art Gallery; through July 31; see Exhibits page in the Arts section

Sunday  
10

- Music: Rux, Hollow Jan, Apollo 18, Coin Rocker Boys @ Rolling Hall in Hongdae; www.rollinghall.co.kr
- Music: Rainbow Island Festival in Chuncheon (Jason Mraz, Kingston Rudieska, etc.); June 9-10; rainbowfestival.co.kr
- Exhibit: Cartoon World @ Seoul Olympic Museum of Art; through June 17; see Exhibits page in the Arts section

Tuesday  
12

- Food: 2 For 1 fish & chips @ Wolfhound (Tuesdays); wolfhoundpub.com
- Pride: **Seoul gay pride parade 2012 @ Berlin Plaza, Seoul; 12:30 pm; www.kqcf.org**
- Lecture: Royal Asiatic Society Korea Branch lecture by Kent Davy @ Somerset Palace; 7:30 pm; raskb.com

Thursday  
14

- Social: Quiz night @ 3 Alley Pub in Itaewon; win beer; 3alleypub.com
- Beer: 15,000 won all-you-can-drink beer @ Beer Garden, Renaissance Hotel, Gangnam (6-9 p.m.); (02) 2222-8630
- Info: Open registration to volunteer through Itaewon Global Village Center; global.seoul.go.kr/itaewon

Saturday  
16

- Music: Suck Stuff, Ska Sucks, Captain Bootbois @ DGBD in Hongdae; 10 p.m.
- Reading: **Kryz Lee reading "Drifting House" @ What the Book? in Itaewon; 6 p.m.**
- Festival: **Everland Rose Festival @ Everland in Gyeonggi Province; through June 17; www.everland.com**

Monday  
18

- Social: Open mic @ Tony's in Itaweon (Mondays); tonysitaewon.com
- Food: Wing night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong (Mondays); http://craftworkstaphouse.com
- Exhibit: Louise Bourgeois' Personages @ Kukje Gallery; through June 29; see Exhibits page in the Arts section

Wednesday  
20

- Festival: **Gangneung Danoje Festival @ Gangneung City, Gangwon Province; June 20-27; www.danojefestival.or.kr**
- Food: Learn about Korea's cuisine with O'ngo culinary tour of Seoul; ongofood.com
- Music: Wouter Hamel @ V-Hall in Seoul; 8 pm

Friday  
22

- Arts: Red Light Winter @ White Box Theatre in Hyochang Park; www.probatinarytheatre.com
- Festival: **Gwangju Toechon Tomato Festival, June 22-24; tomatogjcity.go.kr**

Sunday  
24

- Self-help: Codependents Anonymous meeting @ the International Lutheran Church; 5 p.m.
- Self-help: Overeaters Anonymous meeting @ the International Lutheran Church; 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday  
26

- Stand-up: **Comedian Brian Aylward performs @ Traveler's Bar (Bundang); brianaylward.com**
- Food: Wing night @ 3 Alley Pub in Itaewon; 3alleypub.com
- Food: Pasta night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong (Tuesdays); http://craftworkstaphouse.com

Thursday  
28

- Stand-up: Comedian Brian Aylward performs @ Traveler's Bar (Daegu); brianaylward.com
- Beer: Men's night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong (Thursdays); http://craftworkstaphouse.com

Saturday  
30

- Festival: **Global Myeongdong Art Festival @ Myeongdong Gallery; through June 30**
- Exhibit: "X-sound: John Cage, Nam June Paik and After" @ Nam June Paik Art Center; through July 1; see Exhibits page in the Arts section



## BRIEFS

**Mixed-race children consider themselves ‘Korean’**

A study has found that 73.4 percent of mixed-race children residing in Korea consider themselves “Korean.”

From August to October of last year, The National Youth Policy Institute surveyed 1,502 multicultural teenagers in 16 cities and provinces nationwide, finding that 73.4 percent consider themselves to be Koreans.

Just 3 percent said they consider themselves “of the country where my foreign parent was born” and 21.5 percent consider themselves “both Korean and foreign.”

Further, 80 percent reported that they were proud of having a foreign-born parent.

The study also examined school performance and family income. It found that students of poorer families had more troubles at school, but when economic status improves, so, too, does self-esteem and school performance.

Their psychological development level, resilience and adaptation to school life were found to be lower than other “vulnerable” populations and their school performance was extremely low.

“Unlike the image of them in Korean society, multicultural teenagers see themselves as Korean,” the Institute said. “This study shows that the monolithic, inadequate image of them is seriously misinformed.”

**American soldier accused of rape sentenced to 6 years**

The American soldier arrested in December for raping a Korean teenager has been sentenced to six years in prison and 10 years of sex offender registration.

Although he testified that he had consensual relations with the young girl, he admitted to having done so while she was extremely intoxicated and claimed they had not engaged in sexual intercourse.

The judge, however, said that semen found on her underwear and blood stains at the scene “leave no choice but to find the defendant guilty.”

The judge said he took into consideration that it was the offender’s first rape conviction in his sentence.

**WHY ARE FOREIGNERS COMMITTING MORE CRIMES?**

The increasing number of crimes committed by foreigners in Korea has led to speculation as to the cause – beyond the fact that there are simply more non-Koreans living here than before.

Kim Hae-seong, a pastor at a Chinese-Korean church, said that “Chinese-Koreans are all excluded from the social safety net, so they cannot understand the Korean system.” Kim opines that when Chinese-Koreans face difficulties, they have little recourse.

He also emphasized that discrimination against foreigners must change in order to prevent crime.

There were 1.06 million resident foreigners in 2007, which increased 30 percent to 1.39 million last year.

According to police, in 2004 there were about 9,100 cases of crimes by foreigners, which tripled to 27,000 seven years later.

Crimes by Chinese went from 8,400 persons in 2007 to 26,000 in 2011, nearly tripling. These crimes constituted over half of all crimes by foreigners in each year.

Chinese-Koreans commit a large number of the crimes committed by Chinese in Korea.

**KOREANS OPEN DEBATE ON GAY MARRIAGE**

Lee Ji-yeong and Kim Ji-yeon (not their real names) met four years ago at a swing dance club. They soon became tango partners, then fell in love. For a year now, they have lived together, sharing an apartment and a bed. This wouldn’t normally warrant news coverage, but Lee, 33, and Kim, 25, are both women.

In much of the Western world, gay marriage is generally culturally accepted. Here, it’s still a touchy subject. But recent news coverage of Barack Obama’s acceptance of gay marriage has sparked debate on the peninsula.

Lee and Kim live much the same as any couple. Kim can’t stand it if their home isn’t neat and tidy, while Lee hates to see dust on the floor. They split chores, and Lee has changed her diet to accommodate Kim’s vegetarianism.

Love, they said, has given them the power to go see the world again.

“Before I met Ji-yeong I was consumed with the thought that the world would never accept me and so I couldn’t accept the world,” Kim said. “But by

The number of resident Chinese citizens increased roughly 30 percent since 2007 to reach 503,427, while the number of crimes committed by this segment of the population increased approximately 86 percent.

“The majority of crimes by Chinese are committed by Chinese-Koreans, which make up 70 percent of the resident Chinese population,” said a member of the National Police Agency.

Certain crimes have seen disproportionate increases.

For example, rape went from 50 cases in 2004 to 308 in 2011, a 600 percent increase. In 2004 there were 60 foreigners who committed murder, which rose to 103 in 2011.

Assaults went from 3,300 cases in 2007 to 7,800 last year, a 230 percent increase in five years. In terms of nationality, offenders from China, America and Southeast Asia saw sharp increases.

The number of crimes by Americans went from 140 in 2007 to 1,700 in 2011, showing a significant increase. Crimes by Vietnamese citizens went from 571 cases in 2007 to 2,400 cases in 2011, a 400 percent increase.

loving someone I realized I had the power to love the world.” They told their parents and were accepted. Lee’s mother even encouraged them to “live with courage.”

However, the world does not recognize their relationship. They were rejected from buying an apartment together. Two years ago Lee had a thyroid operation and received outpatient care, she couldn’t designate Ji-yeon as her guardian.

Other major problems for them will be raising a child and their inheritance rights. Lee said that “a single person can adopt, but then one of us will have no legal relationship with our child.

“The world doesn’t recognize a home with two mothers,” Lee added.

Their goal of the legalization of gay marriage is not insurmountable. Kim, a law student who dreams of being a lawyer, said, “I plan to work towards a constitutional amendment to legalize gay marriage. However, eventually we need a society that recognizes that sexual minorities have the right to be a family.”

**IMMIGRATION AFTER AWOL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

The Korean government is becoming increasingly concerned about the number of international students overstaying their visas and the lax oversight by the Korean Immigration Service.

According to the immigration service, 19,178 foreigners were residing in Korea as of March for purposes of studying Korean, with approximately 25 percent of them, or 4,758, expected to be staying illegally.

The Ministry of Science, Education, and Technology first raised concerns of lax oversight last September, after concerns were raised of the increasing number of foreign students “causing damage” to the image of Korean universities.

Korean media used the case of three students who recently went missing from a university in Seoul to illustrate the issue. It was reported that the three students – who had been enrolled in the International

**SUICIDE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG KOREAN TEENS**

Suicide is the leading cause of death among Korean teens, according to a study released last month. In the past five years, 101 elementary, middle and high school students have taken their lives – which works out to about two deaths per month.

The Center for Freedom of Information and Transparent Society published the analysis of statistics it requested from the National Statistical Office, finding that from 2007 through 2009, suicide was the leading cause of death among those aged 15 to 24.

The suicide rate has been increasing yearly in that age group. It stood at 13.2 per 10,000 in 2007, 13.5 in 2008 and 15.3 in 2009.

After suicide, the top cause of teen death was

**‘DON’T ASSOCIATE CHINESE-KOREANS WITH SUWON SLAYER’: EXPERTS**

After the Suwon Slayer was revealed to be Chinese-Korean, Twitter and social media outlets exploded with vulgar criticisms of crimes committed by foreigners and Chinese-Koreans in particular.

Social Metrics analyzed 3,500 Twitter posts in the first week of April, finding that “disapproval” of Chinese-Koreans rose significantly in the days after the crime.

One Chinese-Korean person that was interviewed in Daelim-dong said, “when I go back to China, I will tell everyone how bad Korean people

Language and Culture Education Center at their university – had disappeared, including a 19-year-old teen from China.

When the school – unnamed in the reports – investigated their lodgings, they found nothing but empty apartments. In a statement, the school said the students, who had arrived on C-3 visas, had informed the school that they had been under stress related to entering the school and they told the school they would withdraw. The school has made a final report to the Immigration Service that the students are now unregistered.

The C-3 visa allows residence for up to 90 days and is issued locally. The three students paid the full 1.4 million won tuition for Korean language lessons.

“With time remaining on their visas, they may be intending to take jobs and we believe this must be investigated further,” said an official with the school.

auto accidents – 9.7 deaths per 10,000 in 2007, 9.2 in 2008, and 8.4 in 2009.

The study found that the teen suicide rate increased with age.

Kim Hyeong-tae, a member of the education committee on Seoul City Council, reported similar statistics to those of The Center for Freedom of Information and Transparent Society. According to Kim, statistics from the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education show that 101 students committed suicide from 2008 through March of this year.

That figure includes one elementary student, 27 middle school students, and just under 80 high school students.

are.” He complained of being depressed by the public perception of him because of his ethnicity.

Experts have urged the public not to associate individual crimes with an entire population group. “We have to be cautious in explaining these crimes as the result of social perceptions of foreigners,” said Jeon Sang-jin, a professor of sociology at Sogang University.

A fundamental policy, experts believe, must seek a systematic change in society, rather than focus on short-term punishments.

## BRIEFS

**Sexual assault charges in store for rep of talent agency**

Gangnam Police in Seoul arrested a representative of the talent agency Open World Entertainment, on charges of sexually assaulting trainees in the agency.

According to police, the man, identified only by his surname Jang, is accused of sexually assaulting six trainees. Two of them are minors.

Police seized security camera footage from the accused man’s office in Cheongdam-dong as well as his cellphone and camera.

The victims told police that Jang “said he was going to allow the members of a boy band to also sexually assault us.”

The Chosun Ilbo reported that former members of an unnamed girl group came out to say that they, too, were forced to have sex with Jang. The Herald Kyoungjae reported that a 38-year-old male singer has also been arrested in connection with the case.

Prostitution within Korea’s powerful entertainment companies has been big news in recent years.

Several years ago, actress Jang Ja-yeon committed suicide after revealing that she was forced into the sexual service of powerful men in the entertainment industry.

Despite vociferous speculation and even evidence of such crimes, little came out of it legally.

**Daegu officials at loss about what to do over suicides**

Daegu officials still have no solutions to stem the alarming teen suicide rate in the city. As of mid-May, nine students in the city had attempted suicide via jumping this year, with seven having died.

All of the deaths are school-related. In one case, a 17-year-old girl killed herself by jumping off of a building in early May. The fifth floor of the building contains the study room where she often went after school. She left behind a three-page note in which she blamed her death on bullying and violence at school.

Her death came as more of a surprise because she was at the top of her class and Daegu educational officials remain in denial over the issues of school violence.



# Getting down to business

## Feeling entrepreneurial? Here's a good place to start

By Michelle Farnsworth / Illustration by Adela Ordoñez



Dear Michelle,

I'm setting up my own business in Korea and I need a bank account. What do I need to know?

- Sole Proprietor

Dear Sole Proprietor,

➤ Setting up your own business in Korea can be a daunting task and many variables that we cannot hope to cover here today can affect the process of establishing your business and then setting up your banking. It is best to speak with your teller directly about your unique situation and goals.

For today's purposes, let's talk about setting up your own small private business: a sole proprietorship. In Korea, a sole proprietorship is a business entity with no legal distinction between the individual owner and the business. This is very different from if you were setting up a corporation or a branch office or subsidiary of

an already established global company.

The first thing you must consider is whether or not you are even eligible to simply register a business. If you're not, you'll need to make a foreign direct investment of 100 million won. So, for example, if you have an F-series visa and already have your start-up capital in Korea, the process to establish a business will be quite simple and straightforward. However, if you don't already have a visa that allows you to start your own business, you must go through the FDI process before you can register your business.

*The first thing you must consider is whether or not you are even eligible to simply register a business. If you're not, you'll need to make a foreign direct investment of 100 million won.*

You can refer to Invest Korea ([www.investkorea.org](http://www.investkorea.org)) for more information about Korea's FDI process.

Once you have registered your business with the National Tax Service you can open your self-employed bank account. You must bring your passport or Alien Registration Card and your Business License (issued by the NTS) with you to the bank to set up your business account.

Normally, employees set up a salary account where the employer will deposit their salary each month. As a small business owner, you are no longer eligible to open a salary account. As the owner of a sole proprietorship, you would set up a bank account for the self-employed. This is a very important distinction. In Korea, you are either self-employed or an employee - you cannot be considered both simultaneously by the bank. But you can open as many businesses as you want - and you can open a self-employed account for each one.

One factor to consider carefully when establishing your business is that if you decide to open your small private business with one or more partners, it will make the banking aspect quite a bit more complex. All bank accounts can be opened in only one person's name. So, even though you are a partnership, only one of you can be the account holder. If you choose to just have one account for your business, only the account holder can visit the bank to make transactions and only the account holder will be able to close the account. However, the account holder can get two check cards and the other partner can use the second check card to view account balance and history at ATMs, withdraw cash at ATMs, make domestic transfers at ATMs and make purchases at retailers (online retailers, too).

Alternatively, you could choose to open two separate self-employed accounts. Then you would each manage your account separately. Some business owners are more comfortable with this solution, although it presents some challenges as well.

Of course, the specific features and benefits of your self-employed bank account will vary by bank. Most likely, the benefits you receive will depend on a combination of several factors, such as the average monthly balance in your account, your monthly check or credit card spending, or the amount of customer purchases using your bank's credit or check cards at your place of business. The higher your monthly balance, check or credit card spending - or amount of purchases made at your place of business - the better rates, and lower fees you will enjoy.

Be sure to ask your teller to explain the benefit requirements when you sign up so you don't end up paying fees that may have easily been avoided had you understood the requirements.



### CONTACT MICHELLE

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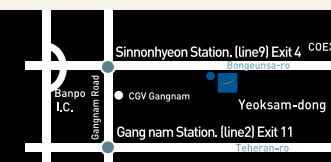


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# Staying motivated to study Korean

What's the trick to studying Korean? Motivation

By Sun Hyun-woo / Illustration by Adela Ordoñez



► Learning a new language can be a lot of fun, and being able to speak it fluently is even more fun. It's not easy – obviously. Memorizing thousands of new words; studying grammatical rules; mastering the pronunciation.

But once you have made up your mind to study Korean, you'll find dozens of different ways to go about it. What do all successful Korean-language learners have in common? In one word – motivation.

How do you stay motivated to study the language when it's so easy to get by in Korea without speaking much of it? Unless you are lucky enough to be in a situation where you are forced to speak Korean every day and everybody is helpful with your learning, you need to find some ways to motivate yourself to study more Korean. Let's look at five ways to do that:

## 1. Find a reason to speak better Korean

Even if you choose not to speak Korean, you can still do everything you want to do in Korea. You can go shopping, see a doctor and even get a haircut and speak English in many places. So the first step in motivating yourself is finding a reason you must learn Korean. If living in Korea itself is not enough of a reason, it will be a good idea to take some language tests and watch your grades improve, or to join a language exchange meet-up. Hanging out with Koreans can motivate you to learn more, too.

If you still can't find a reason to speak better Korean, perhaps you don't really have to learn the language; you can still achieve and experience a lot of things without speaking fluent Korean.

*What do all successful Korean-language learners have in common. In one word — motivation.*

*If you understand more than 80 percent of a certain type of material, move on to something more difficult.*

## 2. Let people know that you are learning Korean

Most Koreans still find it surprising to hear people from other countries speak Korean well. Therefore it is not easy for them to assume in the first place that you are learning Korean. Once you let them know that you are studying the language, however, most people will be willing to help you learn and speak better Korean.

It's tough early on. When you don't necessarily want your every mistake corrected, someone will be there to straighten you out. And then when you're ready for some help, it might be tough to find. But once you start to have more natural conversations, they will also want you to speak better, so they will provide you with a lot of actual language help.

A lot of young Koreans are very active on their social media, so using social media actively to communicate with your Korean friends in Korean can also be good motivation for you.

## 3. Find the material that suits your level

Once you have learned the basics, you will want to move on to the next level. You might want to start reading books or watching TV shows in Korean, but be careful not to rush it. You don't want to get yourself frustrated and lose your motivation. Just because you turn on the TV and don't understand everything you hear doesn't mean you haven't learned a lot of Korean. A lot of people make the mistake of jumping right into the native-speaker-level Korean material once they feel somewhat comfortable speaking. Instead, it is better recommended to start with newbie-level reading and listening. Children's books and easy songs can be a good start.

If you understand more than 80 percent of a certain type of material, move on to something more difficult.

## 4. Avoid saying the same things over and over again

Even if you are not motivated to learn more Korean, you might already be able to say quite a bit in the language. Maybe you can buy things, ask for directions, or order food in a restaurant. But if you feel the lack of motivation even though you are using Korean every day, it could be because you are just saying what you are comfortable with, over and over again.

Have you ever just settled for a simple “gamsahamnida” to thank someone, even though what you wanted to say was way more complicated than the single phrase? If you have, how about actually looking for ways to build on your existing knowledge and learn new ways to say similar things? By broadening the scope of your vocabulary and phrases, you will find yourself able to communicate much more effectively, as well as enjoy learning even more Korean.

## 5. Surround yourself with other learners

You could try to master the language all by yourself, only talking to native speakers and never talking to anybody in English, like some Korean students try to do when they go abroad to learn English. But you would 1) get tired of studying Korean really easily, and 2) waste a lot of time trying many different methods for yourself. Meeting other learners to share studying tips or helpful resources can save you a lot of time, as long as you don't only talk about the methods all day long. If your friend is studying with a resource that you have never even thought or heard about, perhaps you can give it a try. You might find a lot of motivation and fun in it. By interacting actively with other learners, you can also find the answers to some questions that you couldn't elsewhere.

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# Take me home, country roads

## Readjusting after a long stint in Korea

By John M. Rodgers / Illustration by Adela Ordoñez



➤ A week ago, I was sitting aboard an Asiana Airlines flight some 37,000 feet above earth on my way from Seoul, South Korea to New York's JFK Airport where I would catch a flight to Boston and then a ride to northern New Hampshire. I contemplated the transition from a frenetic, wired city of more than 10 million people to a bucolic and isolated town (pop. 4,044). More specifically, I'd be staying at a family member's home more than eight miles (12.8 km) down a road that ends at the state's largest lake, Lake Winnepesaukee – "No Internet here," my older brother told me during a call before my arrival.

Having lived in Seoul for more than five years, it is always a jolt to leave the convenience and buzz of the metropolis to arrive in a rustic setting where the silence and your heartbeat in the middle of night can be deafening. I often find myself feeling uncomfortable and awkward in my first days (jet lag mostly) and weeks (cultural and idiosyncratic confusion) back in the country of my birth. Handing over and receiving money with two hands; bowing to acknowledge people; saying "yeah, yeah" too much; expecting to get places quickly; hoping to get all kinds of side dishes with cheap meals; looking for restaurants that deliver food (they don't here in New Hampshire) – these are the things that I suppose people mean when they refer to reverse culture shock. As I rode north on Interstate 93 in my brother's Volvo wagon with my 100-plus pounds of luggage

in tow, I gazed out at the nascent spring landscape, realizing that a new beginning was underway in nature and my life. How would I adjust?

Stopping in Concord (the capital city) to stock up at the Market Basket supermarket, I got lost in the multifarious aisles, unsure of what to put in the cart – "There is so much stuff," I thought repeatedly – listening for the staple man who calls out "sale" in the meat, seafood and produce sections of every Korean supermarket, prompting the usual push and shove of fervid female shoppers. Yet the store was rather quiet and vacant as closing time neared; a perfect time to shop, my brother advised. The conservative shopping spree came to \$117.52.

Well stocked, we arrived at the 1825 cape-style home under cool star-filled skies. The pleasant smell of wood smoke permeated the old home and the wood floors creaked underfoot – both calmed and welcomed me. Usually, I struggle to sleep after flying for more than 10 hours – jet lag twists the internal clock – but this night I drifted smoothly off into that darkness and woke in the morning feeling rested though misplaced. Strolling into the woods, pine and fallen leaves filled the air with familiar scents and two white tails bounded off over a stone wall that winds through the woods behind the home. No din of traffic. No buzz of people rushing to and fro. The cacophony of the city stood in stark contrast to such solitude.

John M. Rodgers is a founding editor of The Three Wise Monkeys webzine and currently acts as Groove Korea's editor-at-large. John is back in the United States after a long stint in Korea and will be writing about readjustment.

*"It's three miles to Jo Jo's," my brother told me. So I walked it just to see, and three miles really isn't that far.*

As my first day unfolded, there was some oak to be cut, moved and split, a process that is salubrious in its corporeality – everything is physical, methodical, precise. It's impossible to rush. Such work slows down the mind, effaces the urge for digital updates and takes one back in human time. In the evening, as temperatures dipped into the low 40s, a fire needed to be kindled and the wood served its purpose gloriously, crackling and humming in the fireplace, illuminating the living room with a warm, golden hue, offering more reward for the work done.

While in Asia, there was no need for a car. Korea's public transportation is astonishing: ubiquitous, modern, fast. China, Thailand, Japan, among others, all have extensive train and bus infrastructure; once you're off the boat or plane, you have free reign of the land with your two feet and the nearest public transportation. America is different. "It's three miles to Jo Jo's," my brother told me in reference to the nearest convenience store. So the next afternoon I walked it just to see, and three miles really isn't that far. Nonetheless, if you want to get to New Hampshire cities like Concord or Manchester, or Boston (and beyond), you'll have to walk a ways farther to catch the Concord Coach bus (the whole trip on foot is more than 10 miles according to Google).

No, I don't have any urge to get a car in the near term; I'm resigned to perambulate until I feel fatigue or frustration. Just the other day, after getting dropped at the Moultonborough Public Library (open Mon-Thurs, 10-8), a fine, modern two-story building with 10 computer terminals, an adequate book and periodical collection and a friendly staff of females (I got my library card), I stopped by the local bank for a public notary, ate lunch at a small diner, then walked back toward the eight-mile road home.

Clear skies and temps in the 50s made for fine walking, but eventually I decided to stick out my thumb, mostly just to see if I could (the last time I hitchhiked was more than 10 years ago when I lived in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado). Two cars passed, then three more. I walked, then turned to face the cars with my right hand extended, thumb out, slowly walking backward. Seven more cars passed, a few at a time. Finally, some 45 minutes later, a maroon Chevy pick-up truck with a large dent in its front right fender slowed and pulled to the edge of the road ahead. I ran, plopped my bag in its bed and opened the door.

"Thanks for stopping," I said to the driver, a middle-aged man in a baseball cap and canvass jacket, gray hair pushed behind his ears, a smile on his face. "No problem," he said, as I closed the door and noticed an Irish terrier sniffing at my head from the crew cab. "Nobody hitchhikes anymore," he laughed, pulling the truck back onto the road. "That's probably why no one stopped," I said with a chuckle. "That's Daisy," he said, nodding to the friendly dog at my ear. His name was David: a builder, used to be a high school science teacher, went through a divorce. He regretted not going back to teaching. Though I was headed a ways farther past his turn, he insisted on driving me the full distance. "It's no big deal; plenty of time," he said.

"That's it up on the right," I said as we neared the driveway to the white cape. Pulling the beaten-up Chevy to a stop on the dirt road, David turned, held out his hand and said, "Good luck with everything." Again, I thanked him, gave Daisy a pat on the head, stepped down from the truck, swung the big door closed and started up the driveway toward my new home with the realization that wheresoever you go in the world, it's always nice to feel like you're supposed to be there and, whether city or woods, west or east, we all have someplace to be. You'll know it when you arrive. ☺

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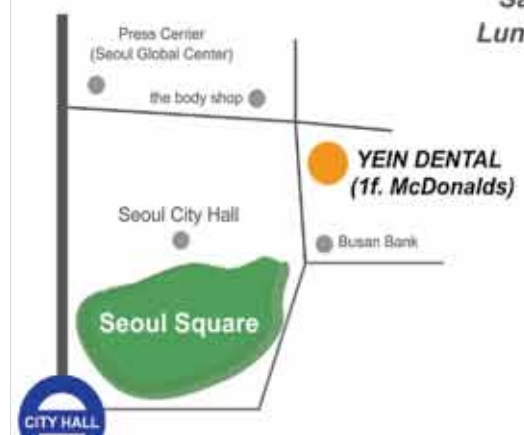
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# Frankensoju

By Lisa Pollack

> The sanitizing effect soju has on your taste buds is anything but appealing. It may make it a helpful stand-in for counter cleaner when you're in a pinch, but as far as consumption the flavor isn't exactly ideal to Western tastebuds. Starting with myself, and then looking to friends, I came up with a few ways to breathe new life into the nectar we all love to hate.



**Lisa Pollack - USA**  
Accessory: re-purposed denim bow.

## Sweet Strawberry Blonde (Soju Strawberry Lemonade)

Since the obvious cocktail counterpart for my ginger complexion comes with a bit of a reputation (a red-headed slut), the daunting feat of soju Jagermeister was most likely a blessing in disguise. This gem surfaced as a tasteful alternative, and surely is more refreshing than a walk of shame.

- In a glass, muddle three lemon slices, one strawberry and one table-spoon of sugar.
- Add one shot of soju and top it off with sparkling water and ice.



**Jeannette New - England**  
Accessory: ice top hat w/ soju bottle shards and green tea jelly.

## Green Bling (Aloe Juice Cocktail)

Jeannette is currently on a mission to create and wear a Korea-inspired accessory every day. Through this endeavor, she finds this cocktail serves double duty. For stress relief, the juices cleverly disguise the soju. In terms of meeting her quota, the residual chunks of aloe left on her front teeth provide a Korean (and sustainable!) alternative to a 14-karat grill.

- 1 shot of soju.
- 1 shot of white Vitamin Water.
- Finish with aloe juice and ice.

*"I pass no judgment if you've had to sneak a peek at your ARC card to remember your middle name the morning after a soju-fueled fiesta."*



**Sally Phillips - England**  
Accessory: frozen milk tiara.

## Wash Your Mouth Out With Soju (Kahlua Soju)

Sally's infatuation with milk came to a breaking point when it dominated her Korean lesson one day. The high point was learning how to order her next low-fat latte, but the low point was mixing up the vowels in the office the next day. The addition of Kahlua soju to her milk has proven effective for stifling the resultant flashbacks.

- Heat 360 ml of coffee and 200 g of sugar on the stove just until dissolved.
- Cool, then add a 360-ml bottle of soju and 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract or half a teaspoon of vanilla powder.
- Mix equal parts Kahlua, soju and milk.



**Leah Galitzdorfer - USA**  
Accessory: (this one wasn't really made, just sewed onto back of shirt) python embroidered patch.

## Sneak Attack (Fire-roasted Chile Mango Martini)

Leah recently made quite the impression on her new soccer team. After an attempt to buy sugar left her with a bagful of salt, her frustration slipped out on an unsuspecting opponent. Deserving of a whistle, the assault led her teammates to reevaluate. Impressions sultry and a little bit sweet, like Leah, don't underestimate the punch that creeps up on you.

- Char one chili over the stove, then halve it and put in 360 ml of soju. Let it infuse overnight.
- Shake one shot of soju, 100 ml of mango juice and a shot of sparkling water with ice until chilled.
- Serve up



**Johanna Wooden - USA**  
Accessory: Jindo dog hair hat

## The Hair of the Jindo (Wasabi Bloody Mary)

I pass no judgment if you've had to sneak a peek at your ARC card to remember your middle name the morning after a soju-fueled fiesta. The hangover is wicked and the cures are sparing. I've got just what you need. This tried and true method will have you back in the game in no time: In a glass, mix two pinches of "beksul" seasoning, half a teaspoon of wasabi paste, and one tablespoon of lemon juice. Make your own sugar-less tomato juice by mixing one part tomato paste with four parts water, then fill the glass two-thirds full. Add three shakes of Tabasco, one teaspoon of Worcestershire, and a splash of Guinness. Serve in a salt-rimmed glass over ice. Garnish with celery, pickled peppers and kimchi.



# Comfort food in a comfortable place

By Rajnesh Sharma

Contrary to what its name suggests, Gobble n' Go is a good place to sit down and get comfortable. The new Itaewon restaurant serves Western food in an atmosphere carefully sculpted by the owner, Paul So.

So has worked hard to make his restaurant comfortable. The place has cushy chairs and soothing music. An enormous mirror, bordered with flickering white lights, reflects a huge Heineken keg and dangling wine glasses. A small television in the corner shows

Korean programs. There is open-window seating with a view of the street in front. The food, too, is aimed at comfort.

They serve breakfast fare, like the Potbelly Oh!-melet. The thick omelet is layered with crunchy onions, sautéed mushrooms, roasted potatoes, ham, bacon, sausage and cheese. It's enhanced with basil, pesto and red and green peppers. A huge grilled tomato, some spinach and a tasty fried banana with chocolate syrup are also served with the meal.

They also have sandwiches and burgers. The Two-Chicken Chic Po' Boy is unique, due to its two distinctly different flavors of chicken. One half of the sandwich is chicken soaked in basil pesto, while the other half is rich with creamed avocado. Both halves of the crunchy sandwich include lettuce, tomatoes and cheese. A thick soup made of creamy mushrooms sprinkled with almonds and a green salad with balsamic dressing accompany the meal.

The Aloha Burger is a meal for the adventurous. It has a thick, juicy patty, lots of melted cheese, crispy bacon, lettuce, avocado, tomatoes, red onions and grilled pineapple. Salty potato wedges come with it, along with the restaurant's "gobbler sauce."

Although the restaurant specializes in brunch, sandwiches, and burgers, Gobble

n' Go serves various salads (caprese, smoked salmon and creamy avocado chicken) and sides (chicken teriyaki wings, nachos and fish n' chips), too. Pasta, risotto and steaks are also available.

So, who studied interior design, said his goal is to create a "comfy, cozy, and causal" atmosphere. Huge photographs of people and places from his travels line the walls. Random mugs, Campbell's soup cans and novels are scattered on the metal beams that stretch high above the rectangular wooden tables and hardwood floor.

The hanging brass kettle, cups, pots, pans, and utensils against the wall and a white chandelier hovering from the ceiling create a unique atmosphere. In the evenings, small lamps and candles on each of the tables are lit, creating a tranquil ambience.



The Potbelly Oh!-melet is loaded with onions, potatoes and several kinds of meat.



**"The Two-Chicken Chic Po' Boy is unique, due to its two distinctly different flavors of chicken. One half of the sandwich is chicken soaked in basil pesto, while the other half is rich with creamed avocado."**

Gobble n' Go is located off the Itaewon main street in the alley with OKitchen and BlessU. To get there, walk out Itaewon Station exit 1, and take your third right. The restaurant is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Meals range from 13,000 to 18,000 won.



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# Preserving Peaches, made easy

By Paloma Julian / Photo by Stevie Rocco

Preparation time: **40 min.**

Difficulty: Moderate

> If I associate any fruit with summer, it's the peach. The smell of it, the colors like a warm sunset – it reminds me of my grandparents' "pueblo," and the jar collection my grandmother used to keep in the pantry.

Her pantry was a place I used to slip into, thinking I was invisible. The place was a sanctuary. I would sit there smelling the aromas, dazed by all the food at hand.

That was the place where I used to steal my precious caramel, chocolate, delicious sweets. I overdosed on sugar then, and sometimes I think that's why I'm able to resist those temptations now.

My grandfather had a small orchard, kind of far from the pueblo. Among other things, he grew peach trees there. This particular part of Spain (forgotten by most everybody but surrealist filmmaker Luis Buñuel) is excellent for growing peaches. They're so sweet that farmers have to cover the fruits with paper bags to discourage the birds from flying down for a feast. I used to help my grandfather cover the peaches. He would pay me a peseta (about 30 cents) per bag. I was six years old, and if I could use the money to buy a few lollipops I was happy. What really made me happy though was my grandfather's pride in me.

After the peaches were harvested, my grandmother's job began. She preserved the fruits so we could enjoy the peaches year round. This recipe is dedicated to my grandma and grandpa, Pilar and José.

## PEACH PRESERVES

### Ingredients:

- Sterilized jars (boil them for 30 minutes without the lid – do the same with the lids but in different water)
- Peaches, as many as you have. Because we cannot predict how big or small the harvest will be, or the quantity of the peaches, this recipe prepares for one liter of syrup; adjust your quantities accordingly.
- 1 liter of water
- Half a kilogram of sugar
- The juice of half a lemon

## DIRECTIONS

First, scald the peaches in boiling water for one minute. Put them in cold water afterwards. Peel them, and cut them in half following the fruit's natural line. Cut down until you feel the pit, then move the knife around the pit and remove it. Next, put the peaches into the jars. Third, we need to submerge the peaches in syrup. Heat the water and sugar, until the water becomes thick. Add the lemon juice and cook for five more minutes. Fill the jars with the syrup, trying not to leave space. Close the jars and heat them in a water bath for 15 minutes.

Take the jars out of the water and place them upside down for around 12 hours to let them cool down completely.

Voilà, peach preserves. You can eat them for up to one year.

**Tip for a dessert:** Set peach halves on a plate, add some cream mixed with vanilla or cinnamon, top with nuts and caramel, and enjoy! 🍴

“They're so sweet there that farmers have to cover the fruits with paper bags to discourage the birds from flying down for a feast.”

**About the author:** Paloma Julian is Spanish to the core, although she hasn't lived there in years. A woman of many talents, she enjoys bringing the nuances of Spanish food culture to Seoul's English-speaking community.

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# Cold noodles for hot days

Story by Read Urban / Photo by Elizabeth Papile

Preparation time: **20 min.**

Difficulty: Easy

> Summer in Seoul is marked by several important things: melon pops overflowing from ice cream freezers, sitting in plastic Family Mart chairs drinking bad beer, and mul naengmyeon for lunch. We are driven from our sticky, unairconditioned apartments out into the real world only to try and find relief from the heat and humidity.

The last thing I want to do in the summer months is turn on my oven. This cold noodle salad is quick, light, and won't have you spending more than five minutes in front of a stove. The prep work is easy and the final dish comes together quickly. Boiling the noodles and a quick sear are the only things that will tear you away from your other summer duties.

The trick with this recipe is cooking the noodles correctly. For most noodles similar to soba or somen you want to cook them all the way through. This can sometimes result in overcooked noodles if you aren't paying attention. For cold noodle recipes I try to remove them from the heat 30 seconds before I think they are going to be done. It might take some practice, but you are looking for firm and fully cooked noodles (save all that al dente talk for the Italians).

Serve this salad soon after you toss it in the dressing. Like any salad, you don't want it soggy and limp. You can prepare most of this beforehand (even cooking the mushrooms), just make sure to keep the dressing separate. If you decide to make this the day before, toss the cooked noodles in a bit of vegetable oil (it will help keep them from sticking together).

## COLD SOMEN SALAD (2)

### Ingredients:

- 4 ounces somen (in Korea, somyeon)
- 4 shiitake mushrooms, stems removed
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 1/2 a carrot, shredded

## FOR THE DRESSING

### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoon soy
- 1/2 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds

## FOR THE MARINADE

### Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon ginger
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 1/2 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil

## GARNISH

### Ingredients:

- Sesame seeds
- Chopped scallions

Combine all of the ingredients for the marinade in a small bowl. Toss the whole mushrooms in the marinade and let them sit for at least 30 minutes.

Bring a pot of water to the boil and cook the noodles according to the package directions. Probably, two to three minutes -- remember, you want a firm noodle that is completely cooked through. Strain the somen and run cold water over them until they are cool.

Whisk together the ingredients for the dressing in a shallow bowl. Toss the noodles, carrots, and cucumber in the dressing.

Place a sauté pan with a tablespoon of vegetable oil over medium heat. Remove the mushrooms from the marinade and pat dry with a paper towel. Sear the mushrooms on one side for about a minute, then flip and finish cooking for another 30 to 45 seconds. Remove from the pan, let them cool slightly, and slice on the bias.

Set the noodle salad on a bed of greens, fanning out the mushroom on top. Garnish with extra sesame seeds and scallions. 🍴

*"This cold noodle salad is quick, light, and won't have you spending more than five minutes in front of a stove."*

**About the author:** Read Urban, a Virginia native, spent years cooking in the United States before coming to Korea. He enjoys experimenting with Korean ingredients, eating at innovative restaurants in Seoul and creating favorites from home.

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# LEARNING TO SURVIVE BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

AUTHOR KRYE LEE SHARES HER OWN STORY

By Kim Stoker / Photo by DukHwa

➤ On the surface, they could be people you've known or people you could imagine having known; yet these familiar faces hide family histories and sorrows dark with secrets and terror too painful to ever tell you about. One such character opens Krys Lee's debut short story collection, "Drifting House."

In "A Temporary Marriage," hapless protagonist Mrs. Shin arrives in California from Seoul in search of her missing daughter, who was taken away by her abusive ex-husband years before. What she discovers is an unexpected companionship with her new, for-legal-purposes-only husband, and the reality of what lengths her own depravity will lead her to.

In February, "Drifting House" made its way onto the American and British literary landscapes, and now it is available in Korea. Published in the United States by Viking/Penguin, Lee's collection of stories has received accolades on both sides of the Atlantic from The Guardian, NPR, The Financial Times, Newsweek's The Daily Beast and others.

Lee is a long-term Seoul expat.

Originally from Seoul, she grew up along America's West Coast before returning to her country of birth.

Having spent her formative years and received her education in the United States and United Kingdom, she returned to Seoul in her 20s. She was on her own. She had to learn the language and the culture like any other expat. Since then, she's made a life here while navigating the balance between being Korean, Korean-American, and a writer who happens to write about Koreans and Korean-Americans.

The first-time author's manuscript created a small flurry in the publishing world of New York. The buzz surrounding her book likened Lee to heavyweight storytellers Jhumpa Lahiri

and Chang-rae Lee, the latter perhaps because of a shared ethnicity rather than a shared writing style. A bidding war ensued. Countless midnight Seoul-to-New York negotiations over the phone later, Lee flew to New York to sign a mid-six-figure contract with Viking for a two-book deal. Through no small effort on the part of her literary agent, the nine stories that make up the collection "Drifting House," finally found a home.

Self-described as being obsessed with time, Lee begins her debut short story collection with an epigraph ruminating on just that: time, its tangible ineffability and the precision with which the human heart measures it.

Stories like "The Goose Father" and "The Salaryman" explore the lives of middle-aged Korean men whose personal sacrifices reflect the bleak realities of modern life post-"IMF crisis," where once-respected family patriarchs became disposable cogs in the working wheel. In contrast to the heartlessness of the city and the heartbreak of the suburbs, the title story, "Drifting House," sheds sober light on the harrowing flight of two brothers crossing into China from North Korea where "behind them, there were the shadows." In spite of such solemnity of subject matter, Lee's prose is unembellished, with the occasional bit of humor thrown in as glimpsed through the eyes of the child protagonists in "At the Edge of the World" and "The Pastor's Son."

Lee recently took time out from her busy schedule to answer some questions for Groove Korea magazine about life in Seoul, her writing and her take on North Korea.

She will read from "Drifting House" at What the Book in Itaewon on June 16.

*"You live life, and when something moves up and upsets you enough, you end up writing about it."*

— Krys Lee



**Groove Korea: You've written a collection that I don't think anybody else could have written. I mean that not only in terms of your talent as a writer, but also in terms of your subject matter. You're in a unique position as a Korean-American who's lived almost half your life as an adult in Korea, and who's also been a part of the first wave of "jaemi gyopo," or Korean-American returnees, who've stayed here and made a life. So as a writer, did you always know that living in Korea would be fodder for the material you'd use in your writing?**

**Krys Lee:** No. I returned to Korea out of a personal need and wasn't even considering writing fiction at the time. I believe it's unhealthy to live your life for your fiction – it's much more important to live as best and as fully as you can and write about your obsessions, whatever they are.

**So what are some of your obsessions these days?**

Power, society and the many ways it influences the individual, class and gender, violence, loneliness and love, religion and the spiritual in general – the idea of houses, and living between two worlds are obsessions of mine. I'm sure there's more but these are ones I've become conscious of upon re-reading "Drifting House." Funny enough, a few of these preoccupations became apparent to me once they were pointed out to me by editors or reviewers, and I found myself agreeing with them. You can't hide from yourself in your fiction, no matter how much you try. Having said that, I'm not sure how healthy it is for writers to be conscious of what their obsessions are, and this worried me as I wrote my second book.

**You've seen a lot of changes in Korea over the years. How has Seoul changed since you first moved here?**

It's definitely become far more modernized and – do I dare say it? – more Westernized, at least on the surface. It also seems to have become polarized in terms of class, but more liberal and equal as well, especially in terms of a gradual shift in male and female relations. There's still a long way to go, but the shift is happening. The rush toward the new is also now accompanied by a nostalgia for the old; you can see this, for instance, in the way traditional architecture has made a comeback, people actively seek out the disappearing sight of "pojangmacha," and how an older generation of bands has been embraced. There's been an infinite number of changes, but these are a few of them.

**"Drifting House" has received some pretty impressive press in the past several months: The Guardian, NPR, The Financial Times, Newsweek's The Daily Beast and others. Has the critical praise been a surprise to you?**

Well, you hold your breath with each review, that's for sure. Starting with a bidding war between eight major publishers for "Drifting House," I must confess, gave me hope that the reviews would be fairly good. But when I got three starred reviews out of four advance reviews – crucial reviews in the industry – my agent and publisher became giddy. They call it the triple-crown for publishing in the industry, I guess. I knew none of this before; I just read and wrote about a world that mattered to me. The learning curve has been steep.

**You just came back to Korea from a four-month trip to do your first-ever book tour in the United States. What was the most surprising and unexpected experience?**



The intensity, the busyness. The lavish treatment as well. Viking was very, very good to me – almost too good. I'd rather save them money and alleviate my guilt! Live radio was terrifying, as were recorded shows such as the BBC's "The Strand" since they were treated as if live, but I was surprised at how someone as nervous and prone to stage fright as I am got used to these after doing a few. I ended up enjoying them, which I never imagined would happen. But, most of all, I was so surprised and touched by readers' e-mails and messages. I got e-mails from Sweden, Germany, the UK, the U.S., all over, and many people wrote and told me how they'd cried reading a particular story, or had ended up buying copies for all of their friends. It's always a small miracle to know that someone out there is reading my book and that it touched another person somehow. That's the greatest gift of publishing a book – to feel less lonely that way.

**Let's talk about loneliness for a minute, and being separated from home – wherever that home may be. Childhood and family seem to be at the core of most of your stories, and within these families there are the themes of displacement, violence, regret, and religion, among others, and yet the collection also has humor and hope. Would you describe these stories as immigrant stories?**

I wouldn't call them immigrant stories, and yet they are in some ways, I suppose. I think of them as stories about individuals with their unique desires and struggles, but because I was so haunted by my parents' generation while writing "Drifting House," immigration is certainly part of the stories' concerns. But so are many other themes – power, society vs. the individual, violence and love are just as prominent, but many critics picked up on the immigrant theme because it's more obvious.

Michael Silverblatt on KCRW's "Bookworm," a wonderful NPR radio show and podcast devoted exclusively to books, noted that some of the stories that focus primarily on love and power, or social issues, for example, have been talked about by other critics as immigrant stories. He felt strongly that the critics were wrong.





**I really liked that the collection ended with “Beautiful Women,” which was an experimental piece. Is there a story that you hold closest to your own heart?**

“A Temporary Marriage” because Mrs. Shin is the kind of woman I understand so well, and pity and admire, “The Goose Father” because I’m obsessed with love and loneliness, and “Drifting House” because I can’t think about North Korea without thinking of all my friends who have defected, and all the sacrifices and loss they’ve endured.

**That brings up another topic I wanted to ask you about. So your forthcoming novel is going to be about North Korean refugees. Could you tell me a little bit more about your current project?**

It’s best not to talk too much about the work in progress, but basically it was inspired by my years of friendships with North Korean defectors and the work I did on the Chinese-North Korean border last year. I learned a lot, and not all of it was heartening.

**One of your close friends, the North Korean defector Shin Dong-hyuk, has recently been in the Western press quite a lot. He’s the first person who was actually born and raised in a labor camp to have escaped and survived. How do you think people like him telling their stories and sharing their experiences can help raise awareness about North Korean refugees?**

Dong-hyuk is amazing. It’s hard for him to keep sharing his story, but it does raise awareness globally. The testimonies of defectors are invaluable because they humanize what can otherwise be seen as an abstract problem. Also, the first defectors’ testimonies were doubted because they seemed so impossible. But now with the sheer number of testimonies available, it’s quite difficult to dismiss a building story about a people who have had to endure so many human rights abuses.

*“I think of them as stories about individuals with their unique desires and struggles, but because I was so haunted by my parents’ generation while writing ‘Drifting House,’ immigration is certainly part of the stories’ concerns.”*

– Krys Lee

**What kinds of challenges have you faced in writing about and researching a community that you’re not an insider of?**

Surprisingly, it was much easier for me to write about North Korean defectors than about people in Los Angeles during the L.A. riots because I’ve been close to activists and defectors for many years now. I’m just writing about people who happen to be North Korean, in a way. The challenge for a writer is to give characters a personality and humanity; the research about facts and so forth is the easier part. In this case, the research wasn’t formidable because I’ve been learning about the community for years, though I hadn’t intended on writing a novel, so it was more a process of osmosis. You live life, and when something moves up and upsets you enough, you end up writing about it.

**Are there any characters from your stories that you’d ever be interested in writing a sequel about? I mean, a follow-up story where we can see where they are at the next stage in their life?**

Actually, the boy Mark from “At the Edge of the World” inspired one of my characters in the novel I’m revising right now. He was so much fun to write that I didn’t want it to end! So I wrote a character that might have been similar to Mark, only this character is older, a teenager.

**You must be really busy writing, but is there anything you’re reading at the moment?**

I’m reading Jeffrey Eugenides’ “The Marriage Plot,” “The Art of Attention: A Poet’s Eye” by Donald Revell, and a memoir by a journalist in Columbia during the drug wars.

**Do you have any favorite Korean writers?**

I like the poets Kim Hye-soon, Kim Sun-woo and Yi Sang, and writers Yi Mun-yol, Kim Tongin and Lee Chung-joon, among others.

**Would you consider yourself a Korean writer?**

I consider myself a writer who happens to be somewhere between Korean-American and Korean, at this point. Of course your ethnicity will influence the world you write about. Funny enough, “Drifting House” is starting to be taught on college syllabi in the U.S. in Asian-American classes as well as Korean literature classes. 📖

#### Book Reading

Krys Lee will be reading at the What the Book? store in Itaewon on June 16 at 6 p.m. Her upcoming novel is tentatively scheduled for publication in winter 2014.

#### Buy the book

“Drifting House” is available at Kyobo Bookstore, Youngpoong Bookstore, What the Book? and Yes24, among others.

#### Contact Krys Lee

You can contact the author via [www.krystlee.com](http://www.krystlee.com) and follow her on Twitter: @krystleewriter.

## AN EXCERPT FROM ‘DRIFTING HOUSE’ BY KRYS LEE

### A TEMPORARY MARRIAGE

➤ Three years after her ex-husband and their daughter, Yuri, disappeared to California, Mrs. Shin designed clothes by day and sold hand-printed scarves by night to save the necessary sum of money to depart Seoul and come to America. In order to find her daughter, she had assented to move into a stranger’s two-bedroom condo on the fringes of Culver City – like two apartments! They would share the common space, nothing more. That had been the agreement.

But now that she had arrived, she saw that the living arrangements could be dangerous. The duplex was hot and cramped inside: a thready chintz sofa, the display cabinets heavy with souvenirs, the cumbersome oak table stained with the marks of sweating glasses, all seemed to touch one another. The kitchen faced the living room, and the living room, Mr. Rhee’s bedroom. If he leaves the door open, she thought, we will see each other each time I look up from the cutting board. The lamp that Mr. Rhee switched on cast more shadows than light.

“Welcome to your new home.” As Mr. Rhee spoke, his hands fluttered skittishly, batting at the air as if there were invisible mosquitoes. “Well, not really so new, but everything works well, well enough.”

“Yes, it is a new home for me, isn’t it?”

She did not want to look at him, understanding that she was aware of him as a man, and that gave him an immediate advantage over her. But she found herself looking. He was gangly and quick like a badminton player, unlike her ponderously built, strong ex-husband, and she disliked her disappointment. His doughy eyelids and sagging cheeks wore more sadness than she approved of, aging his face beyond his fifty years; his baggy peppermint-striped sweatpants smelled like a hospital gown and telegraphed his recent misfortunes. Even after the shame of her husband’s departure five years ago, she had behaved like the fashion designer she was: she had never sanctioned mix-matching her bras and panties or privileged anyone to see her without an Hermès silk scarf, all efforts that gave her the appearance of confidence. Even after she lost her daughter, she had not allowed herself public displays of grief.

“I’ve left you the large room upstairs,” he said. “I don’t need a lot of space.”

Mrs. Shin thanked him, all the time wondering if he was as innocuous as he looked.

“Well, shouldn’t we document this – predicament?” she asked.

They needed photos to authenticate their engagement, then their marriage, to immigration.

“Predicament?” he said. “Well, yes, I suppose that’s what it is.”

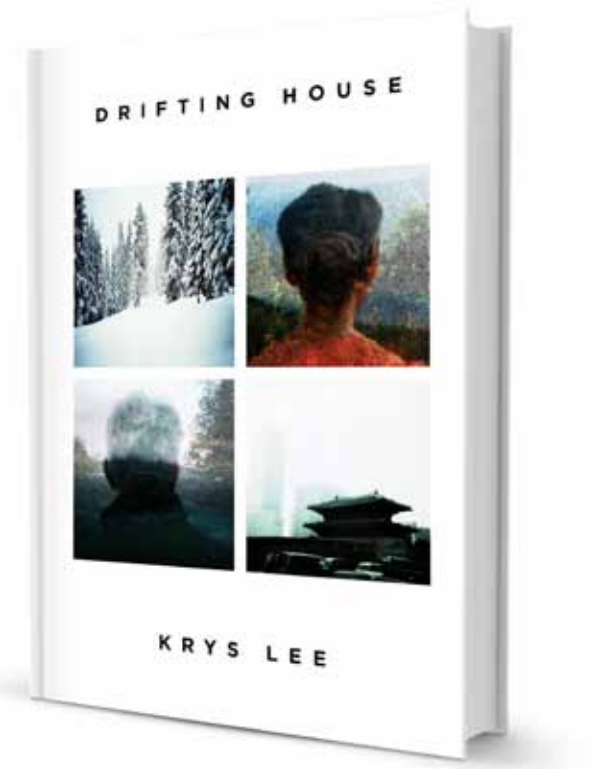
She tolerated Mr. Rhee’s arm around her shoulder, his parched white hair like the roots of spring onions, the dry-cleaning chemicals on his plaid shirt – a professional hazard of running Pearl Express, a dry-cleaning business. His garlicky breath scraped her nose. He, too, must have endured her stale travel smells.

After he set up his camera on the living room table, they both forced a smile until the timer clicked, the shutter snapped back, and she drew away. He continued to gaze.

She said into the silence, “Is there a rice grain on my nose?”

She had chosen not to marry some lonely Korean widower in America the old-fashioned picture bride way. The K-fiancée visa, and the next step, the marriage visa, had cost her a tidy sum precisely so he would not confuse this “predicament” for love.

“You have such young skin,” he said, admiring her smooth, round face, her eyes the shape of plumped kidney beans.



She said, “I’m not looking for a real husband. I thought that was clear.” She was tired and frightened, so her words clicked like stilettos on tile. She added, “I prefer a world without men.”

“Don’t worry,” he said, blushing, twisting bunches of his hair with his hand. “I live for my boys. If you had children, you would know what I mean.”

During Park Chung-hee’s dictatorship nearly thirty years ago, Mr. Rhee had quit his engineering job at Hyundai Heavy Motors and immigrated to America with his wife. The family of four had settled in the basement of a kind American couple and cleaned office buildings until purchasing their own dry-cleaning store. They had done well enough until the recent recession, which had even lawyers watching their expense accounts. Until Mr. Rhee’s wife had abandoned him for an American man she met in salsa classes, he had watched Korean news clips of the developing country’s daily disasters – student demonstrators attacked by pepperspray bombs in 1986, the Samgpoong Department Store collapse that killed generations of families in 1995 – and convinced himself that he had been right to leave, even after the country flourished and began giving academic scholarships to the brightest from Guatemala to Mongolia, and setting trends in film and technology.

Mrs. Shin knew another Korea. In 1996 she had married up. A glittering four-hundred-guest Hyatt Hotel wedding, a Tiffany diamond flashing on her finger, and a villa nestled high in the hills, like a medieval castle overseeing the neon signs and pollution of Seoul, had transformed her. But money in Korea meant residing with the in-laws until the new bride was made acceptable, it meant surveillance and criticism. While hip-hop became the rage and women were sworn in as senators in the National Assembly, Mrs. Shin had subordinated herself to her husband’s will, rivaled her mother-in-law for his affections, and accepted all blame when she remained childless the first six years of marriage. After nine years of a difficult, exciting life together, her husband had said that he could not do it anymore, that they were not healthy for each other, and left with their daughter. She was no different from Mr. Rhee; she felt that she had failed at living.

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# A celebration of Bellydance in Asia

Three-day festival to bring some of the best dancers to Korea

Story by Elise Ethan / Photo by Corey Lajeunesse



► Korea's best known Canadian belly dancer – Eshe, who graced our cover in May 2011 – is taking bellydancing in Asia up a notch with the first annual Asia Raqs International Bellydance Festival in Seoul from June 15 to 17.

Along with daily instructional workshops, the festival will feature sultry, hypnotic nighttime performances by top Korean bellydancers and Seoul-based expats. Several renowned Japanese bellydancers are also slated to fly over and share their love of Middle Eastern-inspired movements.

*“Asia is red hot as far as belly-dance talent goes, and I want the world to know it.” — Eshe*

During the four-and-a-half years that Eshe has lived in Korea, she has wowed audiences at large-scale outings such as the Incheon Pentaport Rock Festival, the Seoul World DJ Festival and the Grand Mint Festival. She has also appeared in the Korean versions of Vogue and Harper's Bazaar. In 2010, she opened her own bellydance studio near Mangwon Station called Dream Dance Studio.

This year, she has created the Asia Raqs International Bellydance Festival to continue to share her love of bellydance and show off Asia's blooming bellydancing scene to the world.

“It's a celebration of bellydancers in Asia,” Eshe explains. “I want to come together as sisters without competition and share our passion. At its heart, bellydance is a social dance. It's a coming together, and I wanted my festival to reflect that.”

“Geographically, the focus for bellydance is often in other places. I want to bring some shine to our shimmies here. Asia is red hot as far as bellydance talent goes, and I want the world to know it.”

Fellow dancer Farasha has showcased her alluring bellydance style in her native Japan and Egypt. She has released several bellydance DVDs and operates her own dance school in Tokyo, too.

Having performed twice in Seoul, Farasha said she is very excited to return to dance and teach during the festival.

“The experiences I've had in Korea have been awesome,” Farasha says. “The dancers I met in Seoul have all been talented and creative. Everyone's dancing was very powerful and beautiful.”

Joining Farasha at the Asia Raqs International Bellydance Festival will be two dancers known as Mimi and Maliha from her

Orientele troupe, Mirage. Mirage was awarded the silver medal at the Tokyo International Bellydance Competition in 2010.

“Mimi and Maliha are becoming famous in Tokyo's bellydance scene,” Farasha says. “They'll be dancing on their own and also performing with me at the festival. We're all really looking forward to getting together with other Asian dancers to share the joy of bellydancing with each other and people in Korea.”

Ken Matsuo from the Japanese band Alladeen, an act that specializes in playing Middle Eastern and Balkan gypsy tunes, will provide live music during the bellydance shows. Originally trained as a jazz guitarist, 10 years ago he met a darbuka (goblet drum) and oud player and instantly became enamored with the instruments.

“I fell in love with Middle Eastern music,” Matsuo shares. “Oud and darbuka make very beautiful and rich sounds. But you need skillful technique to play them and attract an audience. Playing those instruments is more challenging than playing the guitar. That's why I wanted to learn them.”

Nearly all of Alladeen's live concerts feature guest bellydancers. “It is always a lot of fun to make a show together with bellydancers,” says Matsuo. “It creates a much different energy from a regular concert. Bellydancing is a lively and beautiful art form, but it also a great form of entertainment.”

Also at the Asia Raqs International Bellydance Festival, there will be bellydance workshops taught each day at Dream Dance Studio.

There will be bellydance performances in Hongdae on June 15 at Club Freebird (11 p.m. start) and June 16 at Hodge Podge (9 p.m. start) as well. ☺



"The dancers I met in Seoul have all been talented and creative. Everyone's dancing was very powerful and beautiful."

— Farasha





# AT THE BOX OFFICE

## JUNE RELEASES

By Dean Crawford

### PROMETHEUS

Directed by Ridley Scott

Jun.  
7

Action - Adventure  
96 Minutes

#### P R E V I E W



Some directors go through their whole careers and never make a classic. Some get lucky and make one film that stands the test of time – take, for example, Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez’s “Blair Witch Project” (1999) or “Primer” (2004) by Shane Carruth. Both are quality films, though their directors have quietly slid into oblivion.

One exception to this rule, however, is Ridley Scott, who not only made the classic “Alien” in 1979, but followed this up with arguably the greatest sci-fi film of all time, “Blade Runner.” After a long absence, Scott is returning to the genre with “Prometheus,” which may or may not be a prequel to his original “Alien” movie.

It may sound a little strange to not know whether it’s a prequel, but there are several reports arguing both sides. The film started out as a direct prequel to “Alien,” but once development went underway, Scott became aware that he may have been treading on familiar ground and wanted to make something a little different. That was when Damon Lindelof of “Lost” fame was contacted, and he gave the script a new direction.

According to Hitfix, Lindelof told people at this year’s WonderCon: “This movie will hopefully contextualize the original ‘Alien’ so maybe you know a bit more, but you don’t [expletive] around with that movie. If we’re successful

enough to even do a sequel to ‘Prometheus’ it will tangelialize even further away from the original ‘Alien.’”

It’s not a prequel in the traditional sense that this film will take place directly before the 1979 film, but it does include the same “DNA,” as Scott puts it, and is “set in the same world” as the original, as an unnamed source told SkyMovies. I don’t think it’s a coincidence that the planet traveled to in this film is the same one where Sigourney Weaver encountered the original xenomorphs. We will surely discover some kind of origin to the monsters, but the answer to whether this is a direct prequel or not may well just depend on your definition of a prequel.

Even though many plot points have been closely guarded, what we do know is this: The movie focuses on a group of scientists who have discovered a new constellation of stars. Using the ship Prometheus, they travel to uncharted territory hoping to find the secrets to the origin of the universe, but instead get involved in a deadly battle that could well be the end of it. The film features an all-star cast with Charlize Theron, Noomi Rapace, Idris Elba, Rafe Spall, Sean Harris and the excellent Michael Fassbender.

Prequel or not, the excitement for this film is palpable, and it is not only one of the biggest films of the summer but one of the most anticipated sci-fi films in a long time. Let’s hope it’s on par with Scott’s last two efforts.

#### P R E V I E W

### G.I. JOE: RETALIATION

Directed by Jon M. Chu

Jun.  
21

Action - Adventure  
96 Minutes



In general, I like to think I have a pretty good idea of what constitutes a good film. Obviously we all have different opinions, with one man’s “Pulp Fiction” being another man’s “Transformers 3.” But when it comes to this column I feel like I generally give a well-informed, unbiased opinion in telling you what is worth watching. Therefore, I have no explanation for why I am looking forward to watching “G.I. Joe: Retaliation.”

The sequel to 2009’s “G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra” sees our elite squad out on another mission saving the world. However, when this mission goes bad and our heroes are framed for a crime they didn’t commit, they are forced to go underground and find out what really happened so they can avenge the death of their last true ally and fight against the evil Zartan and the world leaders he has under his influence.

The original “G.I. Joe” was no classic and had several issues, the main one being some of the cast, which has been addressed in a brutal way. Marlon Wayans, Sienna Miller, Christopher Eccleston and Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje have all been dropped. In their place come Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, Ray Stevenson, Arnold Vosloo and action movie heavyweight Bruce Willis.

The Rock and Willis in particular give an air of credibility to the film, with the latter being one of the biggest action stars of all time and The Rock no longer known as the

wrestler from the WWF, but an action star in his own right.

One of the best things about the original “G.I. Joe” was the action scenes and I was particularly impressed with the epic sequence in downtown Paris. In the sequel, directed by Jon M. Chu of “Step Up: 2” fame, the action surprisingly looks bigger and better.

One scene of a full-on samurai fight on the side of a mountain the size of Everest looks particularly spectacular. Martial arts star Ray Park, best known for his role as Darth Maul in “Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace,” returns as Snake Eyes, as does Korea’s very own Lee Byung-hun as his brother in arms Storm Shadow.

The scenes between these two and their backstory was one of the highlights of the first film, so I’m hoping for a lot more screen time for both of them.

So, with the deadwood shifted, two action heavyweights recruited and a new young director capable of producing some amazing set pieces, it looks like “G.I. Joe: Retaliation” will continue the trend of awesome summer blockbusters kicked off by “The Avengers.” Well, I hope so, as it appears I’ve put my reputation on it. Did I mention it has The Rock?

Our elite squad is out on another mission to save the world.

# KOREAN DVD CORNER

## MOVIE REVIEWS

By Daniel Joseph Vorderstrasse

### FAMILY MART

Directed by Kim Geon-il

PG-  
12

Melodrama  
91 Minutes



While entertaining friends, Yun-hui (Kim Yeon-soo) and Chan-yeong (No Joon-ho) announce their divorce. After 14 years as a couple, their friends are shocked by the decision to slice their picture-perfect marriage in half. They don’t love each other as husband and wife, but want to remain friends and maintain a family with their son, Jeong-won (Lee Hyeon-joon).

One day when Yun-hui is in a jam, her old friend Seon-yeong (Kim Hyeon-sook) volunteers to babysit Jeong-won. Seon-yeong happens to be in a depressed state after having recently left her lover in Busan to pursue a painting career. Without a residence during her exhibition in Jeonju, Chan-yeong suggests that she stay with Yun-hui to help out.

It works out so well that Yun-hui asks her to move in so they can assist each other during their respective familial struggles. Seon-yeong eventually evolves into a surrogate “parent” for Jeong-won, even attending Parent’s Day at his school.

Yun-hui and Chan-yeong are divorced, but still act like a family on the surface. They sought divorce only to satisfy others’ understanding of their wishes to spend time away from each other – but at the same time maintain their “family.”

#### R E V I E W

While pursuing another woman, Chan-yeong tries to balance the multiple lovers in his life, but the situation quickly turns disastrous. He realizes that he is losing his son and being replaced by Seon-yeong. Simultaneously, Yun-hui recognizes her decreased role as a parent. She is losing her motherly role and ultimately seeks resolve. The couple devises a get-away just for the two of them to try to reconcile their broken family.

Unique in plot, the film has a slow narrative culminating in an uneventful finale. The slow moving narrative – in which everyday life is portrayed – involves few major events. A slight twist does not justify the build-up, leaving one unfulfilled.

Acting as a saving grace from an uneventful script, the cinematography adds dimension to “Family Mart.”

Camera angles, specifically those from a first-person perspective, are simplistic, but offer an independent, artsy vibe; hard cuts and panning offer welcome changes; long cuts allow the movie to flow fluently; finally, very simple sets and costuming create a realistic experience.

Expecting anything more than an anticlimactic drama would be a mistake. With this understanding, an enjoyable 90 minutes could be in store if the genre interests the viewer.

### HINDSIGHT

Directed by Lee Hyeon-seung

PG-  
12

Drama  
122 Minutes



From Busan ports, to Seoul’s high-rise apartments and the Korean countryside, this dramatic thriller follows the leisurely life of retired mafia boss Yoon Doo-heon (Song Kang-ho).

Free from a life of organized crime, Doo-heon enrolls in a cooking class to pass the time. Hoping to open a restaurant, Doo-heon attempts culinary perfection, but fails miserably. Meeting classmate Se-bin (Sin Se-kyeong) offers an attractive exploit. Se-bin is an excellent student, but mysterious to Doo-heon, as she rebuffs his advances.

She is actually on a covert mission to track Doo-heon’s movements. When the “Korean Don” passes away, Doo-heon is summoned back to lead the criminal conglomerate. Some are not satisfied as Doo-heon had supposedly retired and is thought to have lost his edge. A power struggle ensues between rival Busan gangs to determine a successor for the lucrative throne.

Deep in debt to loan sharks and her sister being held hostage, Se-bin has little choice but to accept a contract to kill Doo-heon. Theoretically, it’s an easy kill for her. She’s a crack shot with a rifle and holds the unofficial Asian record for accuracy. Putting a bullet in Doo-heon’s head will result in forgiven debt and a free sister. Unfortunately, she must fight her conscience and growing sympathy for

#### R E V I E W

the target.

The first 30 minutes set the scene and backstory. The pace slows after the opening, differentiating this film from other mafia-focused films. It shifts to a psychological drama. The main story is not a life of crime, but an unlikely relationship between two uniquely connected characters.

While the plot is not intriguing, the story holds the audience’s attention throughout. The bizarre connection between the main characters invokes emotion and empathy. Song Kang-ho puts in a stellar performance in his role, but Sin Se-kyeong matches him line-for-line, creating an entertaining and convincing bond.

What seems like an action flick from the cover and prelude surely isn’t. Although uneventful and lacking any true pace or emotion at times, the film can be enjoyable. It certainly contains holes, so don’t expect a masterpiece.

Song Kang-ho puts in a stellar performance in his role, but Sin Se-kyeong matches him line-for-line.



# AMSTERDAM COMES TO SEOUL

'Red Light Winter' touches upon on taboo topics of drugs, suicide prostitution, AIDS

Story by Anna Sebel



➤ Probationary Theatre brings its most audacious work to Seoul audiences this month with the critically acclaimed, contemporary tragedy, "Red Light Winter."

With half the story set in Amsterdam, the show shines light on the taboo topics of prostitution, suicide, drugs and AIDS. The producers warn that the show contains nudity and strong sex and drug references.

*"This story is much more than a play with drugs and nudity. Does it have these things in it? Yes, it does. It also deals with issues of friendship, betrayal and unrequited love. These deeper themes are what I hope the audience leaves the theatre talking about. We are taking a huge risk putting on a show this raw and real, but the Seoul community is ready for it."*

— Director Stephen Glaspie

Director Stephen Glaspie is adamant that as controversial as these themes may be in Korea, they do not define the show. "This story is much more than a play with drugs and nudity. Does it have these things in it? Yes, it does. It also deals with issues of friendship, betrayal and unrequited love. These deeper themes are what I hope the audience leaves the theatre talking about. We are taking a huge risk putting on a show this raw and real, but the Seoul community is ready for it."

Glaspie's defense is simple. "I just wanted to tell a story that I felt passionate about. I never really thought about the fact that I would be directing it in Seoul."

Actress Desiree Munro added, "I think it's ridiculous to infer that we're putting on a show with sex and nudity to sell tickets. Theatre audiences are more likely to be put off by the idea. Which is a shame, because it's an incredible story, which just happens to have these things in it."

The story tells of two U.S. college buddies who sleep with the same girl, a prostitute, whilst partying in Amsterdam. A sinister and unspoken love triangle develops and the situation strains their friendship in a way that can never be openly discussed. This creates both comic and heartbreaking moments in equal measures. "I think at its core it's a story about a dysfunctional friendship between two straight guys," Munro said. "My character just happens to be the catalyst."

Actor and father of two, Achilles Lakes had no hesitation in accepting such a risqué role and cites his faith in the direction and strength of the script as a reason for auditioning. "I knew Stephen would do it right. Anyone who watches this can't not be moved." Of his fellow

actors, Lakes has nothing but admiration. "Dominic (Dominic Schiferl, who plays Matt) is the strongest actor I have ever worked with. People should see 'Red Light Winter' because of Dominic."

On the more intimate scenes with actress Desiree Munro, Lakes states, "Desi is committed, intelligent, experienced, open and sexy as hell. You won't find a harder working actress in Seoul from start to finish."

Munro, also married, has found the process surprisingly uneventful. "It's anything but gratuitous," she said. "And having a male director and a female assistant director is giving the story great balance."

The cult popularity of the script is about to become mainstream as Hollywood is turning the story of "Red Light Winter" into a movie starring Kirsten Dunst, Mark Ruffalo and Billy Crudup.

To see the story on stage before it hits the cinema, head to White Box Theatre in Hyochang Park, Seoul. Four performances will be staged from June 22 to June 24.

**Friday and Saturday evening shows are 15,000 won.  
Saturday and Sunday's 4 p.m. matinees are 10,000 won.**

**More information can be found at [www.probationarytheatre.com](http://www.probationarytheatre.com).**

## 20 foreign EXHIBITS for June

1

**Artist Name:**  
group exhibition  
**Exhibition name:**  
Seoul in Turbulence: As seen by the AP  
**Running Dates:**  
thru June 3  
**Location:**  
Seoul Museum of History (Seodaemun station, line 5 exit 4)  
**Medium:**  
photography

2

**Artist Name:**  
Veronica Bailey  
**Exhibition name:**  
Modern Myths  
**Running Dates:**  
thru June 8  
**Location:**  
Gaain Gallery (Gyeongbokgung station, line 3 exit 3; transfer to bus 1711 or 1020 until Byucksan Pyeongchang Hillstate

3

**Artist Name:**  
Mayumi Terada  
**Exhibition name:**  
Living Absence  
**Running Dates:**  
thru June 9  
**Location:**  
Museum of Photography, Seoul (Mongchontoseong station, line 8 exit 2)  
**Medium:**  
photography

4

**Artist Name:**  
Kim Hee-jung, Bae Chanhyo, Debbie Han  
**Exhibition name:**  
Photography, Modernity of the Eye  
**Running Dates:**  
thru June 10  
**Location:**  
GoEun Museum, Busan (Haeundae station, line 2 & Dongbaek station, line 2)  
**Medium:**  
photography

5

**Artist Name:**  
group exhibition  
**Exhibition name:**  
Cartoon World  
**Running Dates:**  
thru June 17  
**Location:**  
Seoul Olympic Museum of Art (Mongchontoseong station, line 8 exit 1)  
**Medium:**  
drawings, paintings, digital art

6

**Artist Name:**  
Caroline Swift, Alicia Soon, Catherine O'Connor  
**Exhibition name:**  
A Conglomerate  
**Running Dates:**  
thru June 24  
**Location:**  
Aalto Café, downtown Cheonan  
**Medium:**  
drawings and sketches

7

**Artist Name:**  
Jürgen Nefzger, Kodama Fusako, etc.  
**Exhibition name:**  
White Future: Thinking of Nuclear  
**Running Dates:**  
thru June 24  
**Location:**  
GoEun Museum, Busan (Haeundae station, line 2 & Dongbaek station, line 2)  
**Medium:**  
photography

8

**Artist Name:**  
Louise Bourgeois  
**Exhibition name:**  
Personages  
**Running Dates:**  
thru June 29  
**Location:**  
Kukje Gallery (Anguk station, line 3 exit 1; walk toward Gyeongbokgung and its across the street)

9

**Artist Name:**  
international group exhibition  
**Exhibition name:**  
Global Myeongdong Art Festival  
**Running Dates:**  
thru June 30  
**Location:**  
Myeongdong Gallery (Myeongdong station, line 4 exit 10)  
**Medium:**  
drawings, sketches, paintings

10

**Artist Name:**  
Ganeko Gausike  
**Exhibition name:**  
Asia: Tales in the Trees  
**Running Dates:**  
thru July 1  
**Location:**  
National Museum of Korea (Ichon station, line 4 exit 2)  
**Medium:**  
wood sculptures

11

**Artist Name:**  
international group exhibition  
**Exhibition name:**  
John Cage, Nam June Paik and After  
**Running Dates:**  
thru July 1  
**Location:**  
Nam June Paik Art Center (Shinnonhyeon station, line 9 exit 6; take bus 5001 or 5003 in front of Krispy Kreme to Shingal Police Station; 3 min. walk)

12

**Artist Name:**  
Michael A. Russ  
**Exhibition name:**  
TinTones – Rough Print  
**Running Dates:**  
thru July 31  
**Location:**  
Club MOW – Art Gallery (Hakdong station, line 10; walk straight and take left at intersection, pass BMW and cross intersection toward Mercedes Benz, first street before Jungang Heights Park Apt.

13

**Artist Name:**  
Marc Riboud  
**Exhibition name:**  
Marc Riboud Photography Exhibition  
**Running Dates:**  
thru August 5  
**Location:**  
Hangaram Design Museum, (Nambu Bus Terminal station, line 3 exit 5)  
**Medium:**  
photography

14

**Artist Name:**  
international group exhibition  
**Exhibition name:**  
Move: Art and Dance since 1960s  
**Running Dates:**  
June 15 – August 12  
**Location:**  
National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea, Gwacheon (Seoul Grand Park station, line 4; take a shuttle bus from exit 4, take a tram from exit 2, or 20 minute walk from exit 2)

15

**Artist Name:**  
Ranbir Kaleka  
**Exhibition name:**  
untitled  
**Running Dates:**  
July 3 – August 26  
**Location:**  
Arario Gallery, Cheonan-si (next to Shinsegae Department Store Chungcheong)  
**Medium:**  
video art, mixed media, paintings

16

**Artist Name:**  
Eric Carle  
**Exhibition name:**  
Eric Carle Drawings Exhibition  
**Running Dates:**  
thru September 9  
**Location:**  
Yoondang Art Hall (Apgujeong station, line 3 exit 2; turn left and walk 5 min)  
**Medium:**  
children's drawings and sketches

17

**Artist Name:**  
Russian artists  
**Exhibition name:**  
Symphony of Light and Color  
**Running Dates:**  
thru September 16  
**Location:**  
Asia Museum, Daejeon

18

**Artist Name:**  
Finn Juhl  
**Exhibition name:**  
Finn Juhl's 100 Year Anniversary of Birth  
**Running Dates:**  
thru September 23  
**Location:**  
Daelim Contemporary Art Museum (Gyeongbokgung station, line 3 exit 3; walk straight past Dunkin Donuts and turn right at Starbucks, proceed straight down the alley)

19

**Artist Name:**  
collection from the Louvre  
**Exhibition name:**  
Exhibition of Louvre Museum  
**Running Dates:**  
June 5 – September 30  
**Location:**  
Hangaram Art Museum, Seoul Arts Center (Nambu Bus Terminal station, line 3 exit 5)

20

**Artist Name:**  
William Kentridge & Christian Boltanski  
**Exhibition name:**  
Media Art from the Museum Collection  
**Running Dates:**  
through November 30  
**Location:**  
National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea, Gwacheon (Seoul Grand Park station, line 4; take a shuttle bus from exit 4, take a tram from exit 2, or 20 minute walk from exit 2)

E-mail [matllamers@groovekorea.com](mailto:matllamers@groovekorea.com) to add your exhibit!



# WHEN DID 'INDIE' BECOME A BAD WORD?

JUST BECAUSE IT'S NOT POPULAR,  
DOESN'T MEAN IT'S POOR

Story by Ethan Thomas

## APOLLO 18

Eclectic post-rockers Apollo 18 have seen a meteoric rise in the past few years. They're still considered an underground band, even after winning awards for best new band and best indie group. But as their success increases, so has their touring presence, with shows across Asia and in Austin, Texas for South By Southwest. These guys might just break through the indie stigma and go from the underground to the big time. Watch for it.



#### GALAXY EXPRESS

Maybe the best example of why indie bands are as good or better than corporate rockers, Galaxy Express have consistently been one of the best live acts in Korea since they started in 2006. They're loud, punky, and really good at what they do. They've also played all over Asia and a few shows in North America. Recent awards for best rock album and musician of the year demonstrate that are gaining a considerable amount of support, but we think they deserve more.



#### “Everything popular is wrong.”

– Oscar Wilde

➤ In 2010, a friend and I stumbled onto a music festival in Jeonju where ISI Djangdan were playing. We should have known we weren't in for a typical concert when the Korean band members rolled up in a Volkswagen bus and took the stage in dreadlocks.

They came out and said a few words in a practiced Jamaican accent then started the show. The first song began with the similar drums, bass and samples you would hear from a typical dubstep band.

Think of a more modern, less skeezy Sublime. But then came the pansori vocals, haunting, echoing over the track. The singer sounded like Janis Joplin's ghost. More than anything it was something unique – something that could have only come from Korea.

We stood next to a ginkgo tree and watched a monk give way to the music completely, dancing happier than anyone else in the crowd, sweating in his robes, blissed-out.

I don't know what happened to the band. They might have quit. They might still be flying under the radar. I checked their MySpace page and it said they haven't logged in since November 2011. It said that right above where it read “Type of Label: Indie.”

What do people have against struggling artists? What satisfaction do people get from disparaging those with enough backbone and fortitude to persevere in the face of failure?

It seems a lot of people here have a skewed image of independent musicians. When they picture an indie musician they picture a small apartment with a stained ceiling that leaks. They picture empty ramen cups on the floor. They picture a starving musician pulling out his hair trying to write a hit.

In many other countries, independent musicians are seen to be fighting the good fight. Not signing with a corporate record label equates to artistic integrity, to not selling out.

I think that's a pretty fair idea of how many people think of indie musicians.

This is a country where differences are generally not encouraged and success is measured on a scale made of capitalism. Given that when walking the streets you seem to hear the same 10 songs for months, it wouldn't be out of line to say the music consumer habits here are extremely fad-driven.

So it makes sense that independent music has the deck stacked against it from the start.

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In many other countries, independent musicians are seen to be fighting the good fight. Not signing with a corporate record labels equates to artistic integrity, to not selling out. People don't want their bands to go corporate. Not because they don't want them to succeed or make money, but because corporations are typically bad for art. It's common wisdom that often when a band goes major label their work suffers. Ask any long-time Death Cab for Cutie or Modest Mouse fan.

In the United States, indie rock might imply boring to some, but it's still where a lot of innovative, exciting music is made. Independent record labels like Jagjaguwar, Sub Pop, and Secretly Canadian are respected imprints that people trust far more than the Sonys and Columbias of the music industry.

Here it seems the general impression is that a DIY band playing small shows in Hongdae and putting their music out on the Internet is not winning. Indie means not making it.

We have it wrong. Independent musicians and artists are necessary for a culture to thrive and grow. A band often makes their most inter-

esting work before they sign to a major label. There are exceptions to this, obviously, and Korean musicians would do well to stop listening to so much Radiohead.

I'm all in favor of artists learning form before they start experimenting with technique. But, by all means, experiment. It should be said that there is also an element to the music-making process that is noticeably absent, which would help with experimentation, but I don't want to say anything that could get my visa revoked.

Lack of originality and creative thinking skills are not the real issue. Koreans can be competitive in anything they decide to do. Just because they employ rote learning in school doesn't mean they all think the same. Westerners just like to believe that. But it is a competitive world, and when so many bands get famous in a record label's talent laboratory, it's hard to want to be different.

I'm not expecting anyone to be the next Beatles or Kurt Cobain. I just wish people here didn't hear the word indie and think poor quality.



#### JUCK JUCK GRUNZIE

*This band's about as cool as it gets. Sexy and restrained at times, raucous and heavy at others, Juck Juck Grunzie is predominately female, and all rock star. They've been playing around Korea since 2007, and this noise, psychedelic group is set to take off. Three of the four members are girls, but this isn't anything like a K-pop group. It's too strange for that.*



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A man with dark hair, wearing a green jacket over a white shirt, stands in the foreground looking upwards. The background is a blurred city skyline at night with various lights and buildings.

# DJ Justin Oh

isn't waiting for anyone — he is filling the clubs

Story & Photos by Romin Lee Johnson





► Born in Toronto, Justin Oh is one of the fastest rising and most exciting new talents to emerge from South Korea. Since his debut last year, his music has caught the attention of world class DJs including Paul Oakenfold who featured his song, "Wait For You," on compilations as well as labeling it one of the top tracks of 2011. His track "Teheranno / Karosugil," named after streets in Seoul, was selected by Beatport for their "10 Must Hear Progressive House Tracks Week." He has signed and released music with renowned labels such as Baroque Records, Nueva Digital, Lowbit, Perfecto Records, Babylon Records and Silk Music. Though he is currently taking a break from actively DJing to focus on his upcoming album, he will be announcing his Korea DJ debut via Yelo Agency later this year.

Groove sat down with Oh to talk about his burgeoning career.

"I think people need tension in a club track. Big buildups and climaxes. It keeps things interesting on the dance floor. I want to give people a rush when they are listening to my music."

— DJ Justin Oh

#### Who has influenced you as an artist the most?

Growing up, I was a big Global Underground fan. CDs like Paul Oakenfold's "GU 007 New York" and Sasha's "Involver" were staples in my music collection. As an artist, though, I'd have to say Eric Prydz. I am a huge fan of his style. His music is distinctly original and sounds huge in the clubs. He has a bit of a purist approach to being an artist and his live shows are less of a DJ mix and more concert-like. He just released an artist album last month called "Pryda." People should definitely check him out. Aside from club music, I listen to bands like Sigur Ros, Gorillaz and Daft Punk. I'm also a fan of old school 80's rock, and occasionally K-pop. (laughs)

#### Where do you find inspiration?

Inspiration can come from anywhere – personal experience, people you meet or places you've been. Lately though, it has been from Seoul's nightlife. The city comes alive at night and never sleeps. I love this city. The clubbing scene here is world class and the people love electronic dance music.

#### How do you get into the right headspace when laying tracks?

The music I make now is for the dance floors and clubs. I have an idea on how I want my live shows to sound and progress. For me, it's all about the groove to keep the feet moving and melodies for that emotional pull. When I am arranging a track I am always picturing it for the dance floor. It has to feel "big-room." I think people need tension in a club track. Big buildups and climaxes. It keeps things interesting on the dance floor. I want to give people a rush when they are listening to my music.

#### Can you talk a bit about your process when writing music?

Technically speaking, I usually work from my home studio. It is a simple setup with my Digital Audio Workstation computer at the heart of it, running Ableton Live with some Virtual Studio Technology. I have a little recording setup with a studio mic in the corner of my room to record vocalists when they come in. Sometimes, I will collaborate with another DJ or producer but most of the time I prefer working alone. It's just faster and I can work at my own pace. For the writing process, most of it is experimental. Some days, I'll start with a melody idea from my head and I'll lay it out with different synth sounds trying to get the creative juices flowing. Other days, I'm spending hours trying to find the right kick drum and perfect snare to match it. It really depends on what mood I'm in. The beginning phase is usually just throwing sounds up on an empty canvas and seeing what sticks and what doesn't until I get something going. By that point, I'll be in the zone and the rest is easy from there.

#### When did you first know it was music you wanted to pursue?

It all started with being a fan of the music. Back in university, it was more common for a kid to pick up an electric guitar and start a band. Becoming a DJ wasn't as popular as it is now. I was lucky enough to meet a group of friends that shared similar taste in music. We used to road trip around hitting up big parties and checking out different DJs. Living near Toronto in Canada, we were kind of spoiled to have super clubs like The Guvernment bringing in world class DJs like Carl Cox, Armin Van Buuren, Deep Dish, Sasha, and John Digweed. We even flew down to Miami for the Winter Music Conference one year. I used to go home after those parties and work on music fantasizing about how it would sound in a club. After a while, it got to a point where my music sounded better and better until record labels started to show interest. I guess that is when I started to take it seriously.

#### How would you describe your style?

My style is pretty broad. I've made tracks that are dark and brooding as well as tracks that are uplifting and energetic. It's tough to say because I like to borrow a lot from different genres like trance, house, indie dance and electro. If I had to label it, I would call it big-room, melodic, progressive house music.

#### Is your sound still evolving, or do you feel you've found your "voice"?

It's always evolving. I mean, I never want to make the same song twice. I always try to make something different with a new concept or feel each time around. But, there is a certain style and cohesiveness to all my music. That just comes from my personality and how I write it.

"I used to go home after those parties and work on music, fantasizing about how it would sound in a club."

— DJ Justin Oh

#### Is everything a remix? Is it possible to write something truly original?

Of course. Especially in electronic dance music where you have an endless number of ways to use different sounds. It is a lot different than working with a four-piece rock band or a standard orchestra. There are tons of talented artists out there like Eric Prydz, Deadmau5, Nigel Good, Madeon, Nick Stoyanoff, and Soundprank making amazingly unique music!

#### Anything you're working on right now that you'll be dropping this summer?

I'll have an original track releasing in July through Silk Music. It is an uplifting club track with a bit of a retro vibe to it. I can't wait to try it out in the clubs! There is also a remix I finished for the same label that will come out near the end of summer. Also, I just signed with a pretty big record label, which I can't go into too much detail as of yet. Hopefully, you will hear more about that soon. You can follow me at facebook.com/justinohmusic to keep posted on new music and upcoming shows. 📱



For more information, find Justin Oh on Facebook (facebook.com/justinohmusic). For bookings, e-mail fred@yeloagency.com.



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# Things you have to do this summer

Story by Martin Roche

➤ Looking for something to do now that things are heating up? Enjoy this warm weather while you can – before the humidity becomes oppressive, yellow dust saturates the air and rain pours constantly.

In reality the summer is shorter than it seems, so you may want to plan ahead. A solid mix of adventure and laziness is key to an enjoyable Korean summer.

Having a drink and people watching at your local Family Mart or hiking through one of the most beautiful parks in Korea should be on your list.

You can do it in whatever order you'd like, but there are five things that you must include in your summer plans:

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# 1. Mud Festival Daecheon Beach, Chungcheong

Photo Credit:  
Jordi Sanchez Teruel

Thousands of tourists flock to Boryeong each summer for the Mud Fest – a weeklong orgy of sun, swimming and mud. The gray mud at Boryeong is said to have health benefits.



Hosted on Daecheon Beach on July 14 to 22 this year, the Boryeong Mud Festival celebrates the high-quality mud for which the west coast city is known. In 1996, doctors found the mud to have a high mineral count and cosmetic benefits, and in 1998, people started throwing a festival to celebrate it.

Expats, tourists and nationals alike come out in force to celebrate Mud Fest. There is a parade, fireworks, mud wrestling and mud slide. Swim in the “Mega Mud Tub” or watch the King of the Mud Fest events.

Cover yourself in mud, have a drink and be weird – with thousands of other people.

Take a bus from Express Bus Terminal. Buses run every hour and cost 10,000 to 15,000 won. From the Central City terminal there will be a direct bus shuttle that runs right to the beach during the festival. If in doubt, follow everyone else. For more information and to take a look at photos from the past, visit [www.mudfestival.or.kr](http://www.mudfestival.or.kr).

*Expats, tourists and nationals alike come out in force to celebrate Mud Fest. Cover yourself in mud, have a drink and be weird — with thousands of other people.*

# 2. Hike Seoraksan Seoraksan National Park, Gangwon

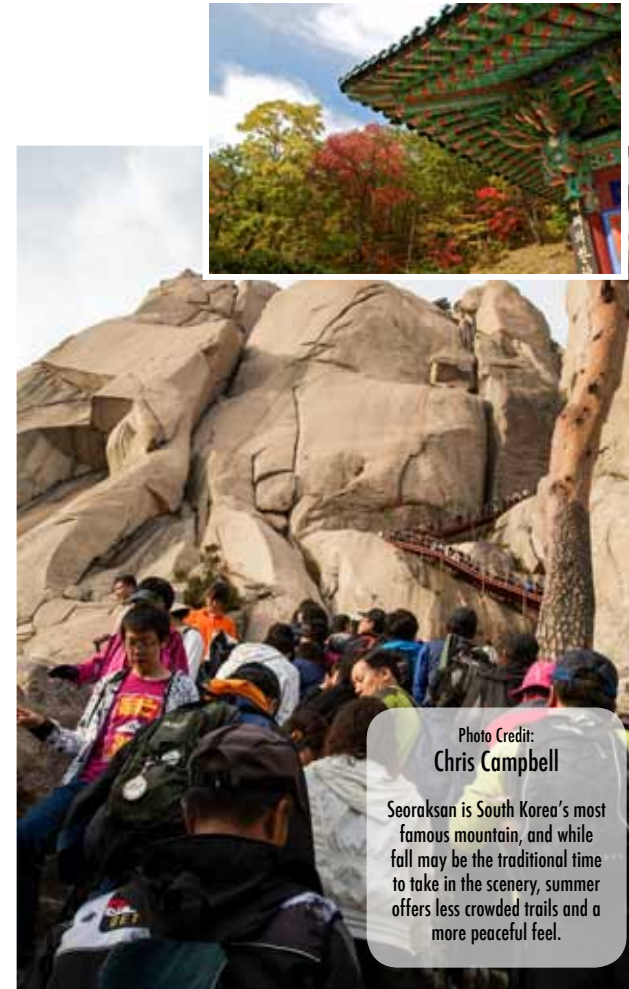


Photo Credit:  
Chris Campbell

Seoraksan is South Korea's most famous mountain, and while fall may be the traditional time to take in the scenery, summer offers less crowded trails and a more peaceful feel.

Seoraksan National Park in Gangwon is a natural wonderland that is best known for its changing colors in the fall. But experience it during the summer when the altitude change doesn't require layered clothing and it stays light out longer.

The park features the Taebaek mountain range, which includes the third highest peak in Korea, Mt. Seorak. It reaches 1,708 meters (5,603 feet) and allows you to see for miles through several valleys below. On some cloudy days you will rise above the fray and it will seem like a different world.

There are many trails that vary in difficulty, from one-hour hikes to three-day escapades. Highlights include a 100-foot waterfall, Buddhist temples and a large bronze Buddha at the entrance of the park. The trails are clearly marked and well maintained with stairs installed for the steeper and more difficult sections.

If hiking and camping isn't your thing, visit the city of Sokcho along the ocean and just 15 minutes from the park entrance. The beautiful beaches are great day or night. There is a large selection of restaurants – go with seafood – and accommodations can be made for any budget. You can camp or stay in a hotel, love motel or hostel.

To get there, take a bus from Seoul Express Bus Terminal for 15,000 to 17,000 won, which departs every 30 to 60 minutes. In Sokcho, the town buses 7 and 7-1 can take you to the park entrance. There is a small park entrance fee (1,500 won).

For more information, check out [www.english.knps.or.kr](http://www.english.knps.or.kr).

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### 3. Island hopping in the West Sea Wolmido, Muuido, Yeongjong

Photo Credit:  
Justin Ornellas

Muuido is one of the easiest islands to get to in the West Sea. Just an hour or so from Seoul, you can be soaking up rays on a sandy beach.



Off the west coast of Korea there are literally thousands of islands, some which are more fun to visit than others. During the summer the islands bristle with overnight campers, day hikers and just about anyone else you can imagine.

It has gotten increasingly easier to visit these islands. Simply take the subway Line 1 to Incheon Station, and from there you can begin your journey to either Muuido or Yeongjong. Take a taxi to Wolmido, the first island on your trip.

While on Wolmido Island you can visit the amusement park that offers just about everything you can imagine. For 13,000 won, you can ride the roller coasters like the Apollo Disco. There is also a cruise offered every hour that tours around the whole island.

It is a short ferry ride from there to Muuido Island, which offers a bit more nature. You can visit one of the many beautiful beaches; several Korean television shows and movies have been filmed there. With smooth, soft sand beaches and mountains inland, there is a good mix of surf and turf.

Hanagae Beach is definitely one of the more popular spots for natives and expats alike. Want to throw the football around and get sauced before the sun goes down? There are plenty of teachers there who visit on the weekends. Huts are available to rent for 30,000 won and will sleep anywhere from three to six people depending on your comfort level. Looking to relax and maybe practice a little of your Korean? This is also a popular destination for nationals and their families. Swimming and hiking are available, great restaurants are within walking distance and there are convenient stores as well.

Be careful with starting fires. They say it's prohibited and the hut owners who are present until 9 p.m. or so might come and charge a 20,000 won fee due at your checkout.

Getting to Hanagae by bus from the ferry is very easy. Follow the crowds and ask an attendant.

For more information as well as packaged tours, visit [english.visitincheon.org](http://english.visitincheon.org).

### 4. Corner Store Drinking Your closest CVS

There is a reason that your local convenience store has tables and chairs set up outside. One of the best parts about summer is simply sitting outside and doing as little as possible. You have seen your Korean counterparts enjoy a few too many bottles of Hite or Cass – now it's your turn to grab some drinks and sit at the impromptu beer garden to people-watch.

It's a cheap activity that will be sure to give you more than a few stories. Without a doubt you will have a Korean or two sit down with you. Be sure to offer them a drink, a smoke or both.



Photo Credit:  
George Kim

Drinking outside convenience stores is a ritual for expats in Korea. Balmy summer nights are the perfect time to chill in a red plastic chair and soak it all in.

### 5. Seoul Searching Haendangdong, Insadong, Jongno

Get lost. Start riding the subway, get off at a random train stop and just start walking. Meander down alleyways, take a street no one else is on, and get yourself lost. Korea is a pretty safe place – though I'd still do this during daylight – but you shouldn't have to fear for your safety.

Keep walking until you don't see Western faces. You can always take a taxi back to the train station. Find a small restaurant and have a bite to eat and a beer. You need pictures for your food? Just order kimbap and a beer and enjoy the little nook of Korea that no other expat has experienced.

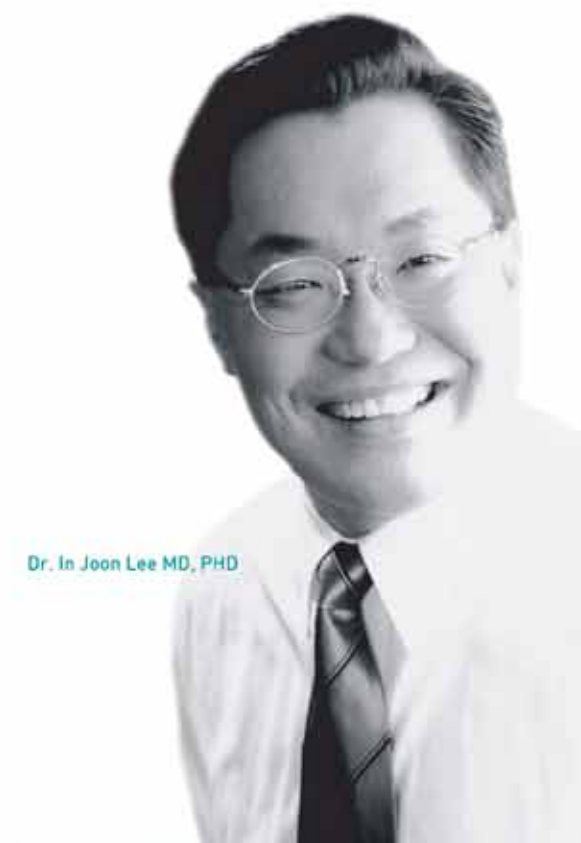


Photo Credit:  
KnittyMarie

Seoul is one of the world's largest cities, and you've only experienced a fraction of it. Hop on the subway, get off at a random stop, and start exploring.

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# Rainy Daze

Story by Colin Roohan

## PHU QUOC, Vietnam —

> I sat impatiently on the bed while rain pelted the rooftop. I was miserable. I shouldn't have been so naïve in my trip planning but my child-like optimism will never leave me. Let me make an official statement: Planning a trip a week before the monsoon season is not a good idea. Don't listen to the travel agents. They're only concerned with your wallet.

Back to the pitter-patter on the rooftop. Having just returned from breakfast, my wife and I sat in our room all hopped up on Vietnamese espresso, trying to play a game of war that seemed to drag on forever. Being confined to a room on vacation in paradise is like getting your wisdom teeth pulled on your birthday.







Said paradise is Phu Quoc, an island off the southern tip of Vietnam, just below Cambodia, which might explain the many attempts to seize this Vietnamese territory throughout the island's history. I first heard of Phu Quoc from a woman who is Vietnamese working as a nurse in Oklahoma. She told me Phu Quoc was the place where Vietnamese went on vacation. The picture she painted was a stunning one: bright colors, pristine beaches, smiling people and delicious cuisine, completely devoid of rain. In my head I was already in transit.

Reading in the forecast that the heaviest rains of the day had passed, my wife and I looked at each other with wide eyes. We looked at our map and set our sights on Duong Dong fishing village. We were out the door with haste and running down to the beach when the winds picked up again. With the sea breeze in our lungs and sand on our feet there was no turning back now. The beaches were of course bare, save for a few stray dogs rummaging in the

trash washed ashore. Palm trees swayed in the wind, echoing the sounds of rain. Despite being soaking wet there was beauty to be found on these beaches.

The beach began to taper in width and the rain slowed to a sprinkle. I noticed a path which appeared to lead into a thicket but as we walked closer I realized that on the other side of the thicket was a road. We emerged onto the pavement and were delighted to see a large group of small houses spattered with bright pastel tones. The air was soon filled with the sound of children playing and the smell of grills being lit. The further we ventured into Duong Dong the more captivating it became.

By the time we reached the market it seemed that the tiny enclave of Duong Dong was lively and bustling, rejuvenated by the sun. As I crossed an old wooden footbridge I was over-

whelmed by the number of fishing boats resting in the harbor and noticed a group of young boys swimming in the area. The boys were jovial and carefree until they noticed me taking pictures from above, which sent them into a fit of laughter and unrestrained chaos. I remember thinking to myself that this was the most unattached from the Western world I had ever felt; everything was so unfamiliar to me, but in a comforting way.

The market vendors were extremely outgoing and humored us with their attempts to sell goods they knew we could easily resist. Cages full of waterfowl, small unknown organs and white gelatinous blocks were all on the menu that day; the merchants chuckled at our suspicious and inquisitive looks. Several vendors tried to explain what some of the items were but the language barrier forced us into that all-familiar game of travel charades.

The swarms of shoppers brought the market to life and the constant flow of trade was enough to drain even the most resilient hagglers. The crowds in combination with the heat (which at this point was an inferno) led us looking for a round of drinks. Inquiries were made and we were told that a quaint cafe on the nearby esplanade could fulfill our wish. We ordered then took our coffee up to a second-floor balcony that overlooked Dinh Cau (the pseudo lighthouse/temple near Duong Dong's lighthouse) and a long stretch of adjacent beach off the western edge of Duong Dong. I thought of the beginning of the day and how drastically the mood of travel can change within the course of a day, hours or mere minutes. This is what travelers as a whole seek; we thrive on the unknown and look forward to the thrill and excitement of the road. Situations like the monsoon we experienced on Phu Quoc helped us continue to be optimistic, always restraining negative thoughts for what lies on the other side of the storm. ☺



# THE SENSATIONAL STORY OF LILLY LEE

Story by Jenny Na / Photos by Dylan Goldby



➤ On the day after Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was elected to parliament in Myanmar, also known as Burma. Lilly Kip Lee could barely contain her excitement. It was a sun-drenched day in Seoul and the prospects for the political situation in her home country suddenly seemed just as bright. In just a few short months, years of struggle had given way to a rapid series of changes throughout the nation, culminating in the election of Myanmar's iconic pro-democracy movement leader. "Did you hear what's happened in my country?" Lilly exclaimed, her voice bubbling with indiscriminate optimism.

Making her way through the city streets that day, her infectious energy turned up to the pitch of her bright red top (her favorite color), Lilly could almost be mistaken for a Korean ajumma. She has the short hairstyle and confident, authoritative manner one would expect of a married woman her age. Yet her journey to married life in Korea could not have been more unique.

Lilly is one of the many immigrant women who have come here to start a life away from home.

To navigate the inherent complexity of inhabiting two different worlds, Lilly grounds herself in her heritage, which gives her the courage and tenacity to keep moving forward.

She arrived in Seoul on a cold day in December 1996 with few possessions, a lifetime of jarring memories and the same strong spirit she's inherited from her father, a pastor in the Seventh Day Adventist church who makes regular appearances in Lilly's stories of growing up, overcoming adversity and her unwavering faith in God.

To get here, she traveled from Myanmar to India and into Malaysia and Thailand, fighting people who doubted her resolve and told her repeatedly that she would not succeed.

What makes Lilly's journey so remarkable is the number of near misses, sheer coincidences and helpful guardians who have appeared at just the right moment to give her exactly what she

needed. By her own admission, it is an incredible string of events and she doesn't often tell the story for fear that people will think she's making it up.

She bears only one physical reminder of her former life: a patch of stark white hair on the top of her head that cropped up while she was working round the clock as a maid in Malaysia to repay an old debt. Try as she might to cover the white with black dye, it is like the memories she holds just beneath the surface. Impossible to erase.

Lilly left Myanmar in 1987. The political situation was steadily growing more volatile and would explode in the year after she left, culminating in the 8888 Uprising against the military dictatorship,

one of the biggest and bloodiest pro-democracy demonstrations in the country's modern history. She knew that if she stayed, it would be nearly impossible to get the education she had dreamed about since she was a little girl.

When, at the age of 19, she told her dad she was going to try to make it to the school in India he had attended as

a young man, he wasn't surprised. She had grown up telling him her dreams, which had been his decades before. And although it was to be a long and arduous trip through the rough terrain separating the two countries, she believed that if her father had done it, she could, too.

In addition to giving her the savings her mom had earned with a small strawberry garden, the family sold their only means of transportation, a pale green bicycle with a bell and working gears they had long struggled to pay for. Her father sent her off with a warning that would keep her safe until her return nine years later: never trust men.

He had also given her a set of skills she would carry with her throughout her life – leadership, communication and ingenuity – a strong desire to help others and a place to call home.

**By her own admission, it is an incredible string of events and she doesn't often tell the story for fear that people will think she's making it up.**

*To navigate the inherent complexity of inhabiting two different worlds, Lilly grounds herself in her heritage, which gives her the courage and tenacity to keep moving forward.*





## INDIA — courage

With her mother, Lilly took a bus 278 kilometers from her home in Maymyo to Si-yin, just outside of Kalaymyo, a major center for cross-border trade with India, where she could look for someone who could get her out of the country.

After a week of searching, she found a young man who was going to the same school and who agreed to accompany her. He was traveling with three other men – one Indian-Burmese, one from Kachin State and a third from Mizoram, their first destination in India.

On the morning she left, she could see the worry in her mother's eyes. Though border crossings were not uncommon, it was a dangerous trip, not least because relations between the two countries had deteriorated over the Myanmar government's crackdown on its people and army patrols were out and hunting for refugees.

Lilly and the four men left Kalaymyo in a jeep to Tedim, the last outpost before the Indian border, in what was to be a three-day journey in the middle of the rainy season. They rose early the next morning and started out on foot through the mountains, cutting through the jungle while swatting mosquitoes and wading through rivers and streams made chest-high by the rains.

As they neared Mizoram, they acquired a jeep. The mountainous terrain made for slow, rough going as the jeep carved its way up a steep dirt and gravel road filled with treacherous twists, turns and sudden drop-offs.



The spring rains had turned the road to mud. They had to move fallen trees to advance. In other places, the road was so narrow that the jeep drove on a steep tilt, with one side on the road and the other going up the mountainside.

There were times when Lilly thought she might die, but she was so eager to start her new life that she pushed away any thoughts of turning back.

The group had to sleep when and where they could and sometimes they would be crammed into a single room in a roadside restaurant with several other travelers. Because she was often the only woman in a sea of men, the nights were the only times during the long trip that she was afraid. One night, she awoke to feel a hand sliding up her body.

Heart racing, she fended the man off by clamping her arms tightly across her breasts. She didn't make a sound, too afraid of the scolding it might bring and the possibility it would jeopardize the remainder of the trip.

She arrived in India on a Friday, a day she remembers well because she spent it at a vesper service in a small church in Mizoram. It was also the first time since leaving that she felt a sense of peace.

Lilly would spend the next six years in Pune, near the country's western border, finishing high school, earning her college business degree and starting a master's program.

She arrived with nearly nothing. After exchanging her money, she had 2,000 rupees (approximately \$37 today) left from the nearly 10,000 kyat (\$1,533) she had with her when she left Myanmar.

The school set her up with a job in the cafeteria – a time-consuming venture that left little time for study. But it wasn't long before she figured out a better way: She could earn the same pay with fewer hours of work by cleaning bathrooms and mopping floors.

During her time there, she endured a good deal of discrimination from her teachers and school administrators. But Lilly always stood firm. She is fiercely resolute, a trait forged through the years of discrimination she had experienced in her youth.

"When I met the financial aid officer, I always felt like he looked down on me (and the other Burmese students) because we were

poor. So I always said to myself that even though he was only looking down on me like that because I had no money, I would never give people a chance to do the same, no matter what," she said, the agitation in her voice growing. "Everyone can get themselves to the top of the world, and I knew that I could, too."

## MALAYSIA — tenacity

As she was entering her first year of graduate school, Lilly had a chance meeting that would change her life.

One balmy night in June, as she and a friend were walking home from work, Lilly watched in surprise as a taxi turned up the drive. Amongst the rickshaws and bicycles that crowded the campus, a taxi was an unusual symbol of wealth and she and her friend paused to catch a glimpse of the passenger behind the glass. They were

surprised when a beautiful young Chinese woman emerged and summoned the girls to ask for directions. Lilly volunteered. She would spend the next week helping the woman, Lucy, get her daughter settled at the school, washing their clothes and cooking for both mother and daughter. She even accompanied the two to Mumbai, carrying their things on

a sightseeing expedition. Because she wasn't accustomed to the idea that her services were valuable, she didn't realize that she was being used.

The first person to point out that there was something wrong with the relationship was a young Malaysian boy. During the trip, he told her that he thought Lucy was treating her like a servant. She marveled that such a young person could make such an astute observation, and though she realized it was true, her upbringing had taught her that this was the way life was for people without money.

Before leaving a week later, Lucy had struck a deal with Lilly. Lucy's brother-in-law would pay for a plane ticket and a work visa in Malaysia and Lilly would pay him back by working first as a nanny to his wife's newborn son and eventually as an employee in the family company.

The promise of office work was the part that intrigued Lilly. It was an opportunity to use her business degree and earn money to send to her family. It was a promise not kept.

*"I always said to myself that even though he was only looking down on me like that because I had no money, I would never give people a chance to do the same, no matter what."*





When Lilly arrived to Subang Jaya, Malaysia, she entered a chaotic household filled with three families – and she was expected to take care of them all. Time after time, she traded her well being for theirs. The families lived in a large, two-story house, but Lilly was not given a place to sleep and she would move around from room to room, staying with different family members. When she wasn't welcome she would sleep on the couch in the living room or go into the baby's room and sit next to his crib with her head pillowed on the gate. She survived on a diet of cup noodles or whatever she could find around the house. Her days were filled with loneliness and she longed for her family and the first love she had left behind in India.

"I used to count when my days there would be over," she said. Normally, Lilly speaks quickly, the words tumbling out of her mouth as if there won't be enough time to get them all out. But as she spoke, it was almost as though she were lifting something heavy, and she pushed out each word with great effort. "That was a painful time that I can never forget."

Managing such a large household wasn't the only problem. Lilly had been prodding the brother-in-law for the work permit and job she had been promised, but he kept putting her off. At one point, he told her he had tried to get her a Malaysian identity card using the name of someone who had died, but after a failed business deal he could no longer afford the fees. It became clear to Lilly that he had never had any intention of helping her gain a legal identity and she made the decision to leave. One morning, the families woke and Lilly was gone.

Lilly's next move was built around an old contact from Korea. Since college, she had been sending holiday cards to a Korean family that knew her dad and had given her a small scholarship. This time, she wrote to tell the family about her situation. They responded by inviting her to live with them.

It was a good plan, but there were three problems. Lilly had only 2 Malaysian dollars to her name and a debt of 10,000 rupees to Lucy's family. And she had long overstayed her tourist visa. Until she could resolve these issues, she would have to eliminate Korea as an option.

She spent the next couple of months working at a Thai restaurant before she landed a job at a motel. She cleaned, served and worked as a cashier. It was a step up, but the hours were long and the rewards few. She sometimes worked three shifts in succession and slept just three or four hours a night. Though she didn't earn much, she kept little for herself and sent the rest to support her three siblings, who had followed the path she had cut to India.

One evening about a year later, long after Lucy and her family had become a bitter memory Lilly wanted to forget, a couple walked into the motel restaurant when Lilly was serving dinner. It was her boss' brother from the house in Subang Jaya and his girlfriend.

The sudden reunion shocked everyone. For Lilly, it was the sign she needed to move on. A few weeks later, Lucy appeared at the restaurant to give Lilly her most prized possession – a red suitcase with a hard plastic shell that her father had sent her while she was in college. She had left it at the house when she fled, and the loss represented the absence of her family, whom she had not contacted in months.

What she didn't know was that her family was already so worried about her that they had sent her brother to Malaysia to find her. When he finally did, after spending days in the trunk of a car on the way from Thailand to Malaysia, he told her she had done enough and that he would stay in Malaysia to repay her debts. He told her that she could finally go home.

## MYANMAR — reunion

Lilly traveled overland across the Malay-Thai border in a hired van with a family friend from Myanmar.

They traveled under the cover of darkness, feigning sleep when police officers shone bright flashlights in their faces as the driver negotiated their passage.

After it up through Thailand's long southern strip, they stayed in a Buddhist temple while trying to buy their plane tickets to Yangon.

People like them had to make their purchase on the black market, where they would pay five times as much as the 1,000 kyat price.

The journey there was across a river by longboat, a prospect that terrified Lilly, who couldn't swim and had been afraid of water since she was young. But it was their only option. When they had made it halfway across the river, the boat operator suddenly jerked his head up and told Lilly and the man in a harsh whisper to put their heads down. He had seen signs of the Myanmar Army patrol. Crouched low to avoid the searchlights scanning the boat, they managed to slip by without incident. Lilly was shaking and her heart was beating nonstop. She thought it was the last day of her life.

The boat dropped them in a jungle far from the city and they made their way to the temple. A month passed.

When she finally landed in Yangon, nine years after she had left, Lilly had a brief, joyful reunion with her parents.

But there was work to do. She still had to earn enough money to get to Korea.

Around that time, she had a chance meeting with another family friend who helped her get a job at the finest hotel in Myanmar, The Strand. A remnant of the British colonial era with stately white columns out front and a rich teak-wood interior, it was worlds away from Lilly's poor upbringing and she worked there for the next half-year as a butler earning \$50 per month, a huge sum. She finally felt like she was making progress.

Her goal was to get to Korea, and that brought her to Bangkok. There, Lilly made one of the most costly mistakes of her life. She needed to get a visa, a nearly impossible task for the average Myanmar citizen. Then, a friend convinced her to change her plans and go with her to Japan. The friend introduced her to a Burmese-Indian man who convinced her to give him \$1,000 to arrange for the travel documents. She waited. After a week, he disappeared.

Lilly was devastated.

But she wasn't about to let it stop her. She found another agent who told her she wouldn't have to pay the fee until after the application process was complete.

She was ready for her next move.

## KOREA — faith

Lilly spent her first month in Korea taking care of her host family's newborn, their three other children and their grandmother. It was looking a lot like her life in Malaysia, and she wasn't happy.

Friends invited her to work with them at a soap factory, but she refused. "I wasn't going to work for anybody this time," she said. "I wasn't going to have a Malaysian life – I was going to do something better."

Instead, she began volunteering at Yeongdeungpo Church in Seoul. In doing so, she was again following the words of her father, who had told her:

*"I wasn't going to work for anybody this time. I wasn't going to have a Malaysian life, I was going to do something better."*



"Wherever you go in the world, the first place you should go is the church. You will never be hungry and you will never be homeless. God will take care of you."

It was there that she met her future husband one month later.

Lilly would say that she met her husband by virtue of God. The Korean ajumma in her church were pressuring her to get married but she did not feel ready for such a big step, so she did what she knew: She prayed.

"Lord, I'm not ready to get married, but if you think that I am, then send me a man. Send me a man, or if not, make me strong enough to be a single woman," she said. "So he sent a man."

Technology may also have played a role in making the match. Lilly had long been curious about computers but had never had a chance to use one. When she saw her pastor's new laptop, she asked if she could use it to write a letter, but shied away when he offered up the value of the device – 2 million won – and how careful she would have to be if she used it. Unwilling to risk damaging such a precious object, Lilly turned instead to a quiet church member who worked for a computer company. Though the two didn't know each other well, having only exchanged greetings of hello and goodbye, when she asked him if he had a computer she could use, he invited her to use the one in his home while he was away at work.

"I went there the first day and discovered he lived in a three-bedroom apartment – alone," she said. "The whole house was a mess, and I decided I would only use the computer after I had cleaned it up."

The next day there was a note. He told her he appreciated what she'd done, but that she didn't need to clean up after him in order to use the computer.

A relationship developed. On a sightseeing trip to Gyeongbokgung Palace with her church group, everyone cancelled except the quiet man who had brought along dictionaries so they could all communicate. After a stroll around the palace grounds, he and Lilly took a picture together and he put his hand on her shoulder. It was the first time he had expressed his feelings for her.

Later, when he asked her to marry him, standing in the small cement yard of the church where they had met, she was shocked into a rare moment of speechlessness. She was overjoyed, but feared she would be a burden to him and his family. It was the middle of the 1997 financial crisis and the income she had gained from teaching English was quickly drying up. She was still sending money to her family and repaying the \$5,000 her parents had borrowed to get her to Korea. There was also the residual fear that she wasn't good enough.

She told him, "I have nothing, I am nothing, I know nothing, so you will be nothing married to me."

She was also wary of marrying a Korean man. The Korean men she had come to know were kind on the surface but controlling – and she wanted none of it. This man was different. He had impressed her with his gentle manner and open heart. Besides which, she had made a list of 20 things she was looking for in a man and he met her criteria: religious, educated and, most important of all, patient. She was also looking for someone who loved his mother but was willing to stand up for his wife – an invaluable trait in a Korean marriage.

Yet it was an impossible ideal. She was often caught in between her mother-in-law and her husband. After Lilly had given birth to two sons, her mother-in-law wanted her to have a tubal ligation. Her husband wanted her to have a daughter. When Lilly sided with her husband, it devolved into a bitter dispute, with her mother-in-law furious that Lilly "only knew how to have babies." Lilly retorted by telling her to never talk to her like that again.

***"I trust that when I die, you will take care of your mother. You will take care of your brothers and sister. You will. And you will take care of our people. You will look at what I have done for this country, for this church, and you will continue."***

— Lilly's father

Meanwhile, Lilly was growing restless. The desire to go to school was gnawing at her – as it always had.

The relationship between Lilly and her mother-in-law broke when Lilly decided in 2004 that it was time to fulfill the last part of her dream: to study nursing in the United States. The decision brought an endless stream of scolding from her mother-in-law: "I trusted you for eight years, you are the best daughter-in-law that I could have asked for, but how could you do this? How can you leave me, how can you leave my son, how can you leave my grandchildren?"

Lilly responded, "I'm not leaving you, I'm coming back. I just need to go to school. If my husband died, if you died, what would I do in this country? Because I know nobody loves me, only you and my husband love me. I have nobody else in this country. I need to have something."

This time, her husband sided with her and provided what financial assistance he could.

A friend suggested she go to language school at Lado International School in Maryland. Lilly threw her energy into making this

plan happen, and made arrangements for her mother to come to Korea to take care of her 24-month-old daughter and her two sons.

Before leaving, she went to her mother-in-law's house one last time to say goodbye. Both were crying and Lilly begged her mother-in-law to let her go. "Just two months for language school," she said. "If I cannot go to nursing school, I will come back."

"I love you, I really love you. I'm not going to leave you and I will take care of you when you are old. I love my husband and my children, but I need to go now. You are still healthy, so you can live without me. By the time I come back, you will need me and I can take care of you better."

"Don't worry about me. I have my God."

It was their last conversation for months.

#### UNITED STATES – dreams

Lilly's drive to get to the United States was another dream inspired by her father, who died in the spring of 1998. As a young man, her father had almost fulfilled his vision of studying there when his grandmother fell ill, forcing him to abandon his studies to care for the woman who raised him after his mother walked out.

Prior to his death, Lilly's father had lived with gastric pain for more than 10 years before ever seeing a doctor because he had never had enough money for the fees. On his first visit, the doctor diagnosed him with cancer. He never told the family.

Lilly heard the news when she returned to Myanmar for her honeymoon. When she arrived, her father averted her gaze as he told her that he may not have much longer to live. She refused to believe it.

"You will never die. God still wants you to work for him," Lilly told him. "I just got married and I have so many things I want to give you." He tried to ease her pain: "God is happy with what I have done in my life. I am happy with what I have done in my life and I am ready to die. I'm not worried about dying because you've married a good man. And I trust that when I die, you will take care of your mother. You will take care of your brothers and sister. You will. And you will take care of our people. You will look at what I have done for this country, for this church, and you will continue."

Those were the last words he spoke to Lilly.

Lilly was scheduled to fly back to Korea the next day. The day after she got home, her father went into the hospital alone. "I never got another chance to talk with him," she said, tears streaming down her face. "He was waiting for my call, he was waiting for me."

After bearing witness to her father's suffering, Lilly decided to become a nurse. Prior to arriving in the U.S., she had applied to a nursing school in Ohio. She was still in language school in Maryland when she received her acceptance letter, but by then her money had run out and she had to forfeit the opportunity.

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Once again, Lilly's luck changed at just the right moment.

One Saturday morning in College Park, she was waiting for the bus to go to church. A heavy snow had begun to fall and the news reports were filled with instructions warning people not to go out. She waited for an hour without seeing her bus. The minute she turned to go home, she saw it lumbering out of the white haze. Nervous about the weather, she hesitated before getting on, but the bus had already started to move and it was too late to turn around. Her doubt only increased when she arrived at the church. She sat on a pew in the fourth row and made several attempts to greet people, but no one returned her invitation to talk. "I was so sad," she said. "I went back and sat down in my chair and cried."

Further down the pew, she spotted two elderly women and mustered the courage to try one more greeting. The women responded with smiles and Lilly introduced herself. One of the women became very excited upon hearing that Lilly was Burmese-Korean, because she had a niece teaching in Korea. The two formed an instant bond and the woman invited Lilly to have lunch at her house. As lunch extended to late afternoon, the snow continued to fall and the woman invited Lilly to stay for the night so she wouldn't have to go out again.

Over time, she would come to think of this woman – whom she calls Auntie Jo – as a second mother.

Down the road, Auntie Jo would be instrumental in getting Lilly into nursing school at Florida Hospital College in Orlando.

That summer, Auntie Jo, who was 77 at the time, piled up the car with donated clothes and kitchen utensils and drove from D.C. to Orlando. When they got there, however, the apartment Lilly had leased was under renovation and wouldn't be ready for a week. She had no place to stay and school was about to start. That's when Auntie Jo pointed to a motel near the school and said she'd already made arrangements for them to stay there. When Lilly protested about the expense, Auntie Jo surprised her with the news that her son owned the motel and they could stay for free until the apartment was finished.

Lilly had been in school for two years when she got the news that her mother-in-law had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. As her father had before her, Lilly forfeited her education to go home.

After her arrival, her mother-in-law's diagnosis was reversed. The news perhaps softened her mother-in-law's attitude toward Lilly because she finally gave Lilly her blessing to return to school and finish what she'd started.

Lilly returned to Orlando in 2008, once again borrowing the money to get there.

She hadn't been there long when she got a call from a Korean-American church asking her if she would be willing to serve as a youth pastor for them.

She had just started working there when she got the news that Cyclone Nargis had devastated her country. The cyclone hit Myanmar in May 2008 and was the worst natural disaster in the country's modern history. Lilly wasn't able to eat for three days because she was so worried about the effect on her mother. Fortunately, her mother's house was spared any damage. Her mother's neighbors were not so lucky, however, and Lilly mobilized the congregation to raise money for her community back home. The money was used to renovate a church that had served as a shelter during the storm and to open a kindergarten.

Back at school in Orlando, Lilly was failing her classes. Though she is a hard-working student, Lilly had never tested well. She has had to take almost every major exam in her higher education history at least twice. One of her teachers was particularly harsh, telling her she would never finish school and that she should just go home.

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***"No matter where I go, no one realizes that I am Burmese, so people always say to tell them that I am Korean-American, but I cannot. I am Burmese. No matter what, I am Burmese."***





That sent Lilly into a deep depression, yet she could not imagine giving up. When it came time for Lilly to register for the new semester, her teacher blocked her registration. She went to the dean, who in turn went to the president, who knew about her situation through Auntie Jo. The president agreed to intervene on her behalf and Lilly started her final semester. She surprised everyone by passing all of her classes and when it came time for the dreaded final exam, she earned exactly the grade – no more and no less – she would need to pass.

She graduated from nursing school in 2009 and returned to Korea to start the next chapter of her life.

Lilly's aspirations now rest on hope for her country. In addition to starting two schools there, with a third one planned, she also hopes to build a church in her father's name.

She also wants to go back to school to study counseling so she can help immigrant women like herself.

"I'm a very positive person and I have a little bit of education so I can manage the difficulty, but there are many women who are married to Koreans who have never really had an education," she said.

"I really want to help them. Although I didn't go through it the way they are, I went through something similar and I think I can help them. They have to be very strong to face the life they are going to face. Instead of giving up, they have to find a way to overcome a difficult

situation. That is the message that I want to convey to these women."

Lilly's children are now ages 14, 13 and 11. She said it was hard to leave them when they were so young, but she did it because she felt they would need her more as they got older and began facing the complexities of being from two different worlds.

It is territory she herself is still attempting to navigate.

Her eldest son once told her that he used to come home crying because his friends would taunt him for having a Burmese mother. And though she has asked to meet their teachers, her children have not yet given her their consent.

But she can see past these difficulties and, like her father, has a broad vision for her children's futures.

"I want my children to have dreams, but I don't want to tell them which dreams to have," she said. "I want to help them find their own."

She does have one dream for them – that they will one day draw strength from their Korean and Burmese heritage just as she has. She has already started telling them her story, which begins and ends with her Burmese identity.

"No matter where I go, no one realizes that I am Burmese. People always say to tell them that I am Korean-American, but I cannot," she said, as her eyes light up and she pulls her spine straight. "I am Burmese."

"No matter what, I am Burmese."



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# Comedian Brian Aylward's Korean comeback

Story by Matthew Lamers / Photos by Dylan Goldby



COMMUNITY  
Canadian comedian

➤ What's the best thing about Korea? If you ask funnyman Brian Aylward, he'll tell you "Thailand." The former EFL teacher turned stand-up comedian said he now makes a living helping to sell beer and chicken wings by telling jokes to strangers.

Aylward will bring his act back to Korea June 26 to July 7, performing on stages in Busan, Bundang, Daegu, Gumi and Seoul.

If you haven't heard the name Brian Aylward before, it might be because you're new in these parts. In Korea, Aylward made a name for himself as a stand up comic and founder of Stand Up Seoul. He was also a humor columnist, writing The Last Laugh, for Groove Korea.

The Grand Falls, Newfoundland native spent six years in Korea - 2003 to 2006 and 2007 to 2010. In the second stint, he performed hundreds of shows throughout Korea and across Asia - in places such as Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Since returning to Canada for good in December 2010, Aylward has been kicking up a flurry in the stand-up comedy scene. His accolades in that short period of time are too many to list here, but include "Halifax's Funniest" in 2011 and the Newfoundland Winner for 2011 Yuk Yuks "Great Canadian Laugh-Off." He's also been featured on CBC television, CBC Radio's "Laugh Out Loud" and XM Radio's "Laugh Attack."

## What Brian Aylward misses most about Korea: "Racism and cherry blossoms." The least? "Cockroaches in my orange juice."

He's just that funny. In fact, it's almost impossible to get a straight answer out of him. When asked what he enjoys the most about being a comedian, he says, "When a new bit works out well on stage. Then, I think maybe I won't have to talk about koala rape that night." His least: "Paying for your chicken wings and draft beer after headlining that club."

And this is what he misses most about Korea: "Racism and cherry blossoms." The least? "Cockroaches in my orange juice." Gross.

Now a famous comedian, his story probably isn't that much different from that of most expats in Korea.

Before he ever picked up a mic, Aylward was unsure of his place in the world, so he traveled - a lot. He's been all over Korea, Japan, China, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines and Thailand. He's taught English as a foreign language in Korea.

In hindsight, those journeys were research, he said. "I am very happy that I have found my funny."

"I got into comedy based on a bet. My girlfriend, now wife, bet me that if she quit smoking for a month that I would have to go up on stage. She quit and I have been telling jokes and stories on stage ever since. My first time was at Rockssins Bar in Anyang, at a popular expat hangout."

Since then the 37-year-old hasn't looked back. In those seven years he's established himself as an international stand-up act.

For the latest on his Korean tour, go to his new website ([www.brianaylward.com](http://www.brianaylward.com).) "You get to support a dreamer and it will be lots of laughs. Plus, I will hug you for an extra two bucks," he said.



Online: Become one of his 1 million-plus followers on Twitter — @AylwardBrian. For more information on the man himself, go to his website [www.brianaylward.com](http://www.brianaylward.com).

### SCHEDULE

#### COMEDY CLUB ASIA TOUR

India: TBA

Singapore: June 13-17

Cambodia: June 19

Malaysia: June 21-22

Indonesia: June 23

For the latest scheduling, go to Comedy Club Asia's website, [www.thecomedyclub.asia](http://www.thecomedyclub.asia)

### KOREAN TOUR

June 26: Traveler's Bar (Bundang)

June 28: Traveler's Bar (Daegu)

June 29: Sharky's (Busan)

June 30: HQ (Busan)

July 1: Yaletown (Sinchon)

July 6: Waegook Cook (Gumi)

July 7: Rocky Mountain Tavern (Itaewon, Seoul)

More shows in Korea will be added to his busy schedule. If you're interested in providing a venue, please contact him via e-mail at [brianaylward11@hotmail.com](mailto:brianaylward11@hotmail.com).



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## CAN'T TOUCH THIS

Touch rugby catches on as a league hits its stride

Story and Photos by James Little

➤ To a few, rugby has connotations of large men physically pummeling each other in the pursuit of victory. To a lot, rugby has almost no connotation whatsoever.

So it may be of no surprise that touch rugby, or touch as it's often shortened to, has not always been the most visible sport on the Korean peninsula. As with many other foreign imports, however, that may be changing.

Touch rugby derives from rugby league, but replaces the physical contact sport with a faster-paced, tackle-free game. In essence it is to rugby what flag football is to its namesake.

Theresa Tupuola-Sorenson, a committee member and the spokesperson for the Korea Touch Association, explained, "(Touch) goes on the

idea that you can play a rugby-type game without the physical tackling. It's basically a communications game where people need to be talking on the field."

The Korea Touch Association, founded in 2008, organizes tournaments and events throughout Korea for the eight to 10 teams affiliated with it.

The KTA is the largest touch rugby organization in Korea and is led by a six-person committee, comprised entirely of volunteers, who aim to promote touch rugby in Korea. So far, it seems to be working.

The style of rugby they promote, devoid of the physical contact that dissuades so many, has begun to attract quite a following around the country.



*"A quick mind is a deadly weapon on the touch field, and often the big, strong boys find themselves struggling."*

— Dain Leatham

In fact, Tupuola-Sorenson said, it has grown from a small group of expats from New Zealand, Australia and South Africa to a much wider audience that includes teams from the U.S. Army, Korean universities and North American expats.

"We try to encourage people to bring families along because there aren't that many expat sports where you can play with your family in Korea. There are not so many sports where you can bring your husband or your girlfriend or your 10-year-old son along to play in the same team as you," Tupuola-Sorenson said.

The sport is also popular with women, who currently comprise just under half of the total number of players. As Tupuola-Sorenson said, "Women in Korea shy away from contact rugby ... so we are trying to extend touch rugby to them and they can play alongside their husbands or brothers and their kids can come along and play."

And many women have, including Tae-eun Lee, a 27-year-old resident of Seoul who stumbled across the sport one day.

"I live close to Jamwon Pitch (in Apgujeong) and saw people who were playing touch when I was riding my bike one weekend morning," she said. "It seemed like fun and I was looking for some kind of team sport I'd never played before."

Lee has now been playing touch rugby for more than three years. She began playing socially for the Seoul Sisters before joining the co-ed Hangang Exiles and said she enjoys both the athletic and social nature of the game, as well as the opportunity to mingle with people from different communities.

"People who love to play sports are most likely to have outgoing or fun-loving personalities. We occasionally go to the pub together after playing or invite each other over for house parties," she said. "There is no discriminating between expats or Koreans here."

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She is in good company and plays with many expats who are looking for a group sport as a way to socialize. Many are also in need of a rugby fix, something that can be hard to find in Korea.

Dain Leatham came to Korea in 2003 from New Zealand and has been playing on and off with the KTA since 2006. He has been active in the sport both in New Zealand and now here.

"When my wife and I first arrived, we organized weekly social games along the river in Ulsan, and when we moved to Paju in 2006, every year we taught it to new people, particularly Americans and Canadians," he said. "We have mostly played with expats, but those Koreans who have joined in have really taken to it quickly. Once you learn a few basics, it's pretty easy to play."

Tupuola-Sorenson emphasizes just how important integrating the expat and Korean teams and players is for the KTA. "We're always trying to bridge that gap between expats and Koreans, despite the language barrier," she said. "You wouldn't think so, but we can all play on the same team. It's actually quite fun for the both of us."

This has been assisted in part by the inclusion of two Korean members on the KTA committee of six, and has enabled the KTA to have much closer relationships with district offices and universities and to attract Korean players.

In fact, both Incheon University and Yonsei University were tentatively slated to host tournaments organized by the KTA, last month and this month, respectively. There will also be two tournaments at Jamwon Pitch in Apgujeong this month, supplied for free courtesy of the Gangnam District Office. The KTA is still hoping to host a tournament outside of Seoul this year as there are now touch rugby teams based in Suwon, Gumi, Paju, Daegu and Busan, which has several teams.

Alongside these competitions, a league for children, The Han River Pirates, has sprung up. It is comprised mostly of students from international schools in Seoul, particularly from the French quarters, and allows school-aged children to get in on the touch rugby action as well.

Returning international competitions to Seoul in future years is also a priority for the KTA. The forerunner to the KTA, which was active from 2006 to 2008, hosted international tournaments welcoming teams from Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, England and of course Korea. But with the departure of the founder of the organization, Jeremy Burks, to China in 2008, the sport almost died out completely.

"It's been kind of hard trying to fill his shoes because he was so involved in sponsorship and getting businesses involved," Tupuola-Sorenson said. "And for us teachers who don't really have business contacts, it's been a bit hard."

However, with new sponsorship this year coming from Sin Bin Sports Pub in Itaewon, an unprecedented turnout of over 100 people to its start-of-the-season open day in March, and teams sprouting up all over the country, the outlook is indeed optimistic for the Korea Touch Association and the sport of touch rugby in Korea.

"I would recommend the game to anyone wanting to have fun, get fit or even just socialize," Leatham said. "I would really encourage women to not be afraid to play against the guys. A quick mind is a deadly weapon on the touch field, and often the big, strong boys find themselves struggling."

With a social yet energetic mix of teamwork and communication it seems that this group of players from all backgrounds will continue to enjoy their Saturdays in the sun at Jamwon Pitch.

The Korea Touch Association enthusiastically welcomes all new players, novice to expert, to join them. Information can be found on their Facebook page [facebook.com/koreatouch](https://www.facebook.com/koreatouch) and their website [koreatouch.com](http://koreatouch.com).

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# SWAZI CANDLES GOING STRONG IN KOREA

Story by George Kim

➤ Available in Korea since December 2011, the beautifully intricate designs of Swazi Candles are handmade in the Kingdom of Swaziland. Swazi Candles became the first company in Swaziland to join the World Fair Trade Organization in 2005.

New products are shipped to Korea every two months.

Swaziland is a tiny landlocked country bordered to the north, south and west by South Africa, and to the east by Mozambique.

The art of millefiori continues in Swazi Candles. But instead of glass, the gifted candle makers of Swaziland use a special hard wax to create their colorful designs. A hard wax veneer forms the outer shell of the candle, which slowly melts when the candle is lit. Hence the rich, romantic glow of the illuminated shell as the candle burns deeper into the container, lighting up the casing. When refitted with a votive or tea candle, the shells can be used after the original wax is gone.

Swazi Candles believes strongly in the principles of fair trade. Its workers are part of the decision-making processes and Swazi Candles is a founding member of the Swaziland Fair Trade Organization (SWIFT). The company also says it shares profits with workers and pays a sustainable wage to all stakeholders.

"We are committed to creating an enjoyable, lighthearted, creative working environment," they said. Benefits in place for staff include health care, a pension, clothing allowance, food allowance, transport allowance, education loans and funeral insurance. They even provide an in-house HIV counseling staff and offer access to SWIFT's training programs.

**Swazi Candles believes strongly in the principles of Fair Trade. Its workers are part of the decision-making processes and Swazi Candles is a founding member of the Swaziland Fair Trade Organization.**



## HISTORY

Two South African art graduates founded Swazi Candles in an old cowshed in 1981. In those days, Swaziland was a slice of heaven compared to its troubled neighbors and proved to be an excellent place to set up a cottage craft industry. The mountainous countryside was beautiful, the Swazi people were warm and friendly and proved to be fine handcraft workers. These skilled artisans have proven to be ideal partners.

The little workshop soon gained a reputation for producing unique candles. Before long, it started attracting visitors from close and afar.

The vibrancy of the workshop, uniqueness of the product and skill of the artisans resulted in Swazi Candles becoming one of Swaziland's premier tourist attractions. By the mid-90's, the humble cowshed workshop had burgeoned into an operation that employed more than 200 local people and exported candles all over the world.

The past few years have seen the company release some new products, including 100 percent organic soya candles, wax glow lamps – which work from batteries and electrical outlets – and handmade balms and soaps.

## PROCESS

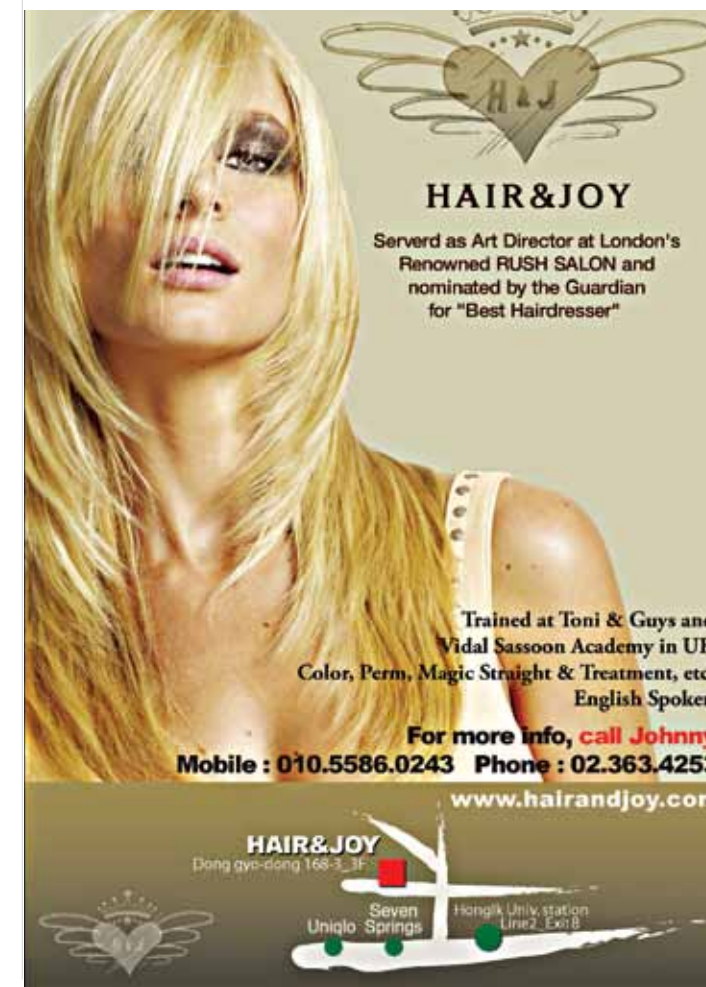
Coloring occurs by mixing pigments with hot wax, which is then poured into flat sheets. The sheets are marked, cut and carefully layered according to the design.

The resulting slabs are compressed, extruded and re-extruded and then sliced into thin veneers.

These veneers are then taken by the candle makers and skillfully stretched over a core of pure white wax and handmade into the desired shapes. 📺

## INFORMATION BOX

**Online:** [www.swazicandles.com](http://www.swazicandles.com)  
**E-mail:** [afrikanstar@naver.com](mailto:afrikanstar@naver.com)  
**Phone:** (02) 6448-1959





# RESIST MUCH?

DON'T RESIST RESISTANCE TRAINING — YOU ONLY HAVE FAT TO LOSE, STRENGTH TO GAIN

Story by Tyson DeWees



➤ Are you reluctant to engage in resistance training? The idea of sweating it out in some basement gym with other hulking bodies just isn't appealing to you? Are you worried that you will injure your back, knees or shoulders? Let me put your mind at ease. First, no basement gyms a la Pumping Iron needed. Second, by not doing resistance training, you could be neglecting your spine and joints.

Maybe you are a cardio machine, you love running in open spaces, playing games of pick-up basketball or hitting the links for a game of golf. Believe it or not, you still need to do resistance training. Just playing sports, the occasional jog, or your aerobics class isn't enough. You need to participate in what I like to call "training to support your activity." By training to support your activity, you will experience fewer injuries – either acute or chronic from overuse – and you will actually play better.

In this column I'm not going to explain how to include resist-

ance training or how to perform specific exercises, but I hope to show you why you need to include resistance training. I will give you the most pertinent information from a research paper by world-renowned fitness expert Dr. Wayne L. Westcott. I hope to overwhelm you with all the positive aspects of resistance training.

First, it would be best to define resistance training, or what is commonly called strength training. According to the medical dictionary from the freedictionary.com website, strength training is "a method of improving muscular strength by gradually increasing the ability to resist force through the use of free weights, machines or the person's own body weight. Strength training sessions are designed to impose increasingly greater resistance, which in turn stimulates development of muscle strength to meet the added demand." I would include increasing muscular endurance as well.

Now for the facts and studies; did you know that men and women gain about 10 pounds of weight for every decade after middle age? The typical response to this weight gain is a calorie restrictive diet, according to Tufts University. Unfortunately, about 25 percent of weight loss during a low calorie diet is muscle tissue (Ballor & Poehman, 1994). Men and women lose about 5 pounds of muscle tissue every decade after middle age (Evans & Rosenberg, 1992). Combine these two studies and that adds up to a lot of fat gained and a lot of muscle lost, affecting health and appearance.

Muscles are our little engines. Loss of muscle means a slower metabolism, and that can mean a 2 to 5 percent decrease in resting metabolism per decade leading to more added weight (Evans & Rosenberg, 1992; Keyes et al., 1973). This will happen in spite of cardiovascular exercise; aerobic activities do little to slow muscle loss as we age (Pollock et al., 1987).

Studies with senior men (Menkes et al., 1993) and senior women (Nelson et al., 1994) who strength train showed significant increase in bone mineral density, which may reduce osteoporosis.

Another benefit was enhanced glucose metabolism that may reduce adult onset diabetes (University of Maryland, Hurley, 1994). Also, three months of weight training demonstrated a 56 percent increase in gastrointestinal transit speed (University of Maryland, Koffler et al., 1992).

Researchers at the University of Florida showed that properly performed strength training can reduce low back pain and Tufts University showed it could reduce arthritic discomfort.

These are just some of the well-researched and proven benefits of resistance training. It doesn't take a lot of time or even effort to gain these benefits. A large-scale study at the South Shore YMCA (Westcott & Guy, 1996) compared all ages of adults following an eight-week training program consisting of 30 minutes of strength training and 20 minutes of aerobic exercise. What they found was all groups reduced their weight by 2 to 2.6 pounds and reduced their body fat by 2 to 2.3 percent. This is not counting all the other added benefits such as daily function and a better sense of wellbeing.

Don't resist resistance training. Find a qualified fitness professional or class and join today. You only have fat to lose and strength to gain. 🏋️

Tyson DeWees is director of fitness at Body & Seoul Martial Arts and Fitness Center. He can be reached at seoulmartialarts@gmail.com. – Ed.

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**Phone:** (02) 796-6560  
**Address:** S-121 Rich-  
encia, Hannam-dong,  
Yongsan,gu, Seoul.

*"Group personal training is systematic and effective. It happens in very small groups, so people find it more personal than regular fitness facilities in Seoul."*

— Lee Seung-hwan (Lance)

➤ When Lee Seung-hwan, or "Lance," and his wife "J" opened Korea's first personal training center in Apgujeong in 2005 to VVIPs, Lance said it was very popular – almost too popular.

Because the clients were "very very important people," Lance was somewhat restricted in the number of clients he could take on and the different activities he could offer. He wanted to grow his business and introduce more activities.

A year later, that's exactly what he did. when he and his wife moved their business north of the Han River and opened Lance & J Squash, Group P.T in 2006 in Hannam-dong.

"I really wanted to open it up to more people and have more activities," he said.

In October 2011, they launched their newest concept, Lance & J Squash \* Group Personal Training.

The way it works is that clients can choose from a list of monthly scheduled "activity classes."

Those classes are capped at six people. It's basically a way of incorporating personal training into group exercise.

"It's more interesting to work out with a number of people," said Lance. "Everyone does it together, so they have more fun. Running on a treadmill is repetitive and you only use certain muscles, but personal group training is functional because you work all the important muscles. It's also good for the mind, which will improve your lifestyle."

At Lance & J Squash \* Group Personal Training, there are four main types of group personal training.

Balance Group P.T involves six main sections: Yoga, Pilates, Body Balance, Ballet Fit, Stretch and Balance Ball. These exercises strengthen the core of the body. Cardio Group P.T involves four main sections: Step, Body Combat, Boxing and Multi Flex. Cardio respiratory endurance is enhanced by the body's blood circulation. Strength Group P.T involves Kettlebell, CrossFit, Gym-stick, TRX and SBT. Here, muscle energy is maximized through activities that maintain muscle strength and elasticity. Last is Youth Group P.T, which involves Youth Fit, Youth Ballet and Youth Squash.

Lance & J Squash \* Group Personal Training has five elements of fitness: Muscle strength, Cardio Vascular system, Flexibility, Body composition and Muscle Endurance.

Lance said his clients prefer Lance & J Squash \* Group Personal Training to other fitness centers because he offers more personal and systematic treatment. "It's systematic and effective. It happens in very small groups or one-on-one, so people find it more personal than regular fitness facilities in Seoul."

Each training session lasts for 50 minutes. A typical routine starts with a warm up, then comes stretching, which is followed by various exercises using props in the gym.

Customers can choose from about 40 activities, which change every month.

Down the road, Lance said he wants to expand across Korea.

"I am proudest when I see clients happy and fit," he said. ☺



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➤ Medical tourism has exploded in popularity recently, partly due to the spread of the Korean Wave, but mostly due to the superiority and affordability of Korean medical services. This year, the number of medical tourists in Korea is expected to top 120,000 for the first time. They can be divided into two categories: Health services and beauty services. Hospitals and beauty clinics in Gang-nam Gu, southern Seoul, are leading the fray. Gang-nam Gu has five large-scale general hospitals including Gangnam Severance Hospital, Samsung Medical Center, Gangnam CHA Hospital and Wooidul Spine Hospital, and over 2,000 hospitals and clinics including plastic surgery, dermatology, dentistry, ophthalmology, and oriental medicine clinics, providing diverse medical services ranging from treatment of critical illnesses to aesthetic dermatology. Each medical institution boasts world-class medical staff and superior one-stop medical service using the latest medical equipment and high-end medical facilities.

Following are short feature articles on some of the leading hospitals and beauty clinics in Gang-nam Gu.

**“Our level of medical technology is comparatively higher than other countries. We are also more accessible.”**

— Ahn Chul-woo,  
Director of international healthcare center



## GANGNAM SEVERANCE

### Yonsei University Gangnam Severance Hospital

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**E-mail:** [victoria@yuhs.ac](mailto:victoria@yuhs.ac)

**Phone:** (02) 2019-3600

**Address:** Gangnam Severance Hospital Eonjuro 211 (Dogok-dong 146-92), Gangnam-gu, Seoul 135-720, Korea



➤ Dr. Ahn Chul-woo, general director of Yonsei University Gangnam Severance Hospital, said the reasons so many foreign patients seek out the hospital every year is three fold: quality, access and price.

“Our level of medical technology is comparatively higher than other countries. We are also more accessible,” he said, referring to the fact that Korea is just a few hours from Japan and China.

Gangnam Severance Hospital is one of the most popular medical facilities in Korea for foreign patients, medical tourists in particular.

Medical tourism is defined as travel across international borders to obtain health care.

Gangnam Severance Hospital treats foreign patients – most come from Russia, Kazakhstan, the United States, Vietnam and China.

Average expenditure depends on out-patient or in-patient care, but it averages out to approximately \$800 per person.

“We are very proud of our physical check promotion center for diagnostic purposes,” said Dr. Ahn.

Gangnam Severance Hospital was the first hospital in Gangnam to be accredited by the Joint Commission International, which is the most reliable evaluation body in the global medical field. The JCI accredits health care organizations that meet an established set of standards (1,214 measurement elements in 13 chapters), which are designed to improve

the quality of medical care and ensure patient safety.

There are six specialized centers: Health Promotion Center, Emergency Care Center, Endocrinology and Diabetes Center, Cerebrovascular Center, Cardiovascular Center and the International Health Care Center.

The International Health Care Center in particular is trying to establish a one-stop service system. It offers primary medical care service and routine physical check-ups. There are 35 clinical departments and three specialized hospitals. There are 804 hospital beds including VIP rooms. The Emergency Care Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Payment of treatment is usually required up front.

Hospital representatives boasted of The U-Health Center – a kind of remote exam center that operates between countries. Known as telemedicine, it is the use of telecommunication and information technologies to provide health care over great distances.

Yonsei University Gangnam Severance Hospital has partners in Vladivostok, Russia, where patients visit and a doctor in Korea can prescribe treatment. There is also an affiliate in Hanoi, Vietnam.

“Our center is relatively new, but very we are very enthusiastic and eager to help as many people from as many countries as possible,” said Dr. Ahn.

**“Our center is relatively new, but very we are very enthusiastic and eager to help as many people from as many countries as possible.”**

— Ahn Chul-woo,  
Director of international healthcare center



➤ Even before entering the front door of Miz Medi Hospital – the second-biggest women’s hospital in Seoul – it’s apparent that this isn’t a normal medical faculty. Architecturally, the building is modern, welcoming and spacious, impressive even for this wealthy Gangnam neighborhood. The whole structure is built around an outdoor garden – visible through floor-to-ceiling windows on all of the building’s floors.

There are clear Western influences in its design. And that’s no mistake. In fact, Dr. Roh Sung-il, chairman of Miz Medi, planned it that way. For Dr. Roh, his architecture, his medical empire and the man himself all have something in common: They’re built on a pioneering, Western-inflected foundation that maintains traditional Korean values.

Dr. Roh is nothing short of a pioneer in Korea’s OB-GYN field. It’s in his blood. His father imported the first ultrasound machine to Korea and introduced Western gynecology to Severance Hospital.

Miz Medi has introduced many new technologies in Korea. “We were first in many areas in the OB-GYN field in Korea,” Dr. Roh said.

He follows in his dad’s footsteps. Dr. Roh’s a leader in stem cell research, he produced Korea’s second test tube baby, introduced endoscopic surgery and many other technologies in the fertility field. His treatments have helped reduce stays in his hospitals from seven to two days on average.

Miz Medi was founded in 1963 by Dr. Roh Kyung-byung and now has 80 doctors and 600 staff. It is one of six stem cell R&D centers in the world to have received R&D funds from the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the United States Department of

Health and Human Services.

Miz Medi was accredited by the Joint Commission International on April 5, giving it the highest international safety and quality certification. It is one of only 12 hospitals in Korea to gain the certification, and the only woman’s hospital to do so. “Since my father’s generation, we have realized the importance of global standards. We have been working since then to meet strict global standards.”

Miz Medi is designed to be foreigner-friendly from the inside out. Not only is the building designed to appeal to a Western aesthetic, but services are tailored to foreigners, too. Dr. Roh said many of the doctors at his hospital studied in the United States. “Our doctors speak better English than most other Korean doctors and the consultation room and the other rooms are separate,” he said.

In every exam room they have an ultrasound machine.

Popular services with foreign patients include all gynecology services, cancer detection, short stay surgery and infertility treatments. “We are focusing on shortening the stay in hospitalization; right now it’s 2.6 days on average, but normally it’s five-six days.

Another priority is establishing a telemedicine network where they will treat patients remotely. Right now, Miz Medi is working with hospitals in the Philippines. Telemedicine is the use of telecommunication and information technologies to provide health care over great distances.

“I’m very proud of our tradition and regard it as my mission to give back to Korean society,” Dr. Roh said.

**“Since my father’s generation, we have realized the importance of global standards. We have been working since then to meet strict global standards.”**

— Dr. Roh Sung-il,  
Chairman of Miz Medi Hospital

## MIZ MEDI HOSPITAL

### Miz Medi Hospital

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**E-mail:** [enquiries@mizmedi.com](mailto:enquiries@mizmedi.com)

**Phone:** (02) 3467-3794

**Address:** 1021-4 Daechi-Dong Gangnam-Gu, Seoul





*"We are proud that we can detect cancer and other diseases at an early stage so they can get appropriate and timely treatment."*

— Dr. Cho Sang-hun

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➤ "How much would you pay to save your life?" asks Dr. Cho Sang-hun. His facility, the SNU Hospital Healthcare System Gangnam Center, prides itself as being the premier facility in Korea to detect any number of diseases at an early stage.

For a 50-year-old Russian female earlier this year, that saved her life. When she went to the SNU Hospital Healthcare System Gangnam Center for a routine medical screening on the advice of a friend, it turned out she had a high probability of having cancer. She had doubts and returned to Russia. Russian doctors said she was cleared, but the Gangnam center persisted that she should take immediate action and submit to more thorough screening in Korea. When she returned for further testing, doctors in Korea caught the cancer just in time.

"We are proud that we can detect cancer and other diseases at an early stage so they can get appropriate and timely treatment," said Dr. Cho.

The facility specializes in screening. Treatment is not provided.

For 600,000 to 700,000 won, you get 70 kinds of blood tests and a number of other tests. The Basic Program covers the most common diseases, such as cancer and diabetes.

Doctors there suggest everyone over the age of 40 get tested annually in order to detect diseases such as cancer as early as possible, which they say significantly increases

the chances of survival.

The Hospital Healthcare System Gangnam opened its doors in 2003. Its highly-trained doctors use state-of-the-art equipment to achieve accurate and early diagnoses.

Its clients are 70 percent individuals and 30 percent corporate.

There is an international team consisting of four doctors, two nurses and one bilingual coordinator. All speak English fluently. "There won't be any language problems at our facility. Patients can make a reservation over the phone and get a consultation in their native language," said Cho.

The SNUH Healthcare System Gangnam Center has liaison offices in Los Angeles and New York. From there prospective patients can make appointments and reserve accommodation, if necessary.

Because they are only a screening center and do not offer treatment services, the SNUH Healthcare System Gangnam Center has a relationship with about 2,500 hospitals in Korea. They say they can set you up with the best hospitals in each field.

In 2011, 2,280 foreign patients visited the Gangnam center. That number has risen rapidly since 2006, when it was almost zero; 50 percent of the patients are from the United States and Canada, followed by Russia (28 percent) and China (11 percent). The remainder come from Japan, Europe and Southeast Asia.

*"There won't be any language problems at our facility. Patients can make a reservation over the phone and get a consultation in their native language."*

— Dr. Cho Sang-hun



## SAMSUNG

MEDICAL CENTER

**Samsung Medical Center**  
**Online:** [www.samsunghospital.com/global/eng/patientCare/ihs.jsp](http://www.samsunghospital.com/global/eng/patientCare/ihs.jsp)  
**E-mail:** [ihs.smc@samsung.com](mailto:ihs.smc@samsung.com)  
**Phone:** (02) 1599-3114  
**Directions:** Go to Irwon Station (Subway Line 3), Exit 1. It's a 5 minute walk from there.

Last month, 57-year-old Jackson, an American, was rushed to the Samsung Medical Center's ER via helicopter from Incheon International Airport, where he arrived from Southeast Asia. He had diabetes and heart disease and had recently suffered a stroke. Samsung Medical Center staff are happy to report that he well on his way to making a full recovery.

"We were able to help this patient. I doubt whether this could have happened anywhere else. I was proud of our hospital that day," said Lee Sang-chul, director of International Health Services, Samsung Medical Center.

Bilingual staff? Check. Samsung Medical Center has staff who speak English, Russian, Arabian, Japanese and Chinese. Helicopter pick-up? Check. If it's an emergency and you're coming from overseas, a helicopter will pick you up from Incheon International Airport and fly you to Samsung Medical Center in Seoul in just 20 minutes.

"We are proud to have the best quality service – not only limited to medical services, but also logistical services such as our helicopter pick-up," said Lee.

Within the Samsung Medical Center, there is a special department for foreign patients.

"The difference between our services and other clinics is that our doctors pay a visit to in-patients every day," Lee added.

Samsung Medical Center even has specially trained nurses for foreign patients.

*"We are proud to have the best quality service — not only limited to medical services, but also logistical services such as our helicopter pick-up."*

— Dr. Lee Sang-chul,  
Director of International Health Services, Samsung Medical Center

To make payment as smooth as possible, the center has partnerships with more than 20 international insurance companies. That means if a foreigner doesn't have medical insurance in Korea, they can use their insurance from overseas at Samsung Medical Center.

Samsung Medical Center has about 20,000 foreign patients per year on average. Americans represent about 65 percent, followed by Russia (10 percent), France and Canada (20 percent). The remainder come from 90 countries.

The most popular treatments they seek are for chronic diseases such as cancer and circulatory internal diseases, brain rehab and diabetes.

Another reason foreign patients visit Samsung Medical Center is because its services are much more affordable than the same ones in the United States.

Dr. Lee used treatments for an appendicitis as an example. In the United States, it can cost as much as \$20,000 for the procedure, he said, but in Korea the same one costs only \$2,000.

Samsung Medical Center is not a member of JCI, but they are accredited by Samsung International Standard.

Their strongest fields are cancer, circulatory internal medicine, transplants and brain tumor treatment.





*"We're a one-stop service. We have everything an international patient needs."*

— Dr. Jang Jee-soo,  
Wooridul Spine Hospital president

## WOORIDUL SPINE HOSPITAL

### Chungdam Wooridul Spine Hospital

**Online:** [www.wooridul.com](http://www.wooridul.com)

**E-mail:** [wipc@wooridul.co.kr](mailto:wipc@wooridul.co.kr)

**Phone:** (02) 513-8385

**Directions:** 47-4 Chungdam-dong,  
Gangnam-gu, Seoul.



➤ Early last month, an 8-year-old Indonesian boy checked into Wooridul Spine Hospital. The diagnosis was bleak: a spinal tumor. No hospital in his native Indonesia would even accept him. He eventually chose Korea over the United States because the cost in Korea was seven times cheaper.

His case is a testament to Korea's growing clout in the international medical tourism sector and Wooridul Spine Hospital in particular, which Dr. Jang Jee-soo, president of Wooridul Spine Hospital, said "is the best hospital in Asia."

The hospital – founded in 1982 in Busan – is known throughout the world as being the best in the field of spine science, according to Dr. Jang.

The president touted Wooridul Spine Hospital's accreditation by the Joint Commission International in 2010, giving its safety and quality a globally recognized stamp of approval. It is one of only a dozen hospitals in Korea to gain the certification.

Dr. Jang said the hospital is also known for its "minimally invasive treatment" advanced spinal surgical technique, which Wooridul Spine Hospital developed. He called it a "bloodless" way to save normal disc tissue. The main difference between minimally invasive treatment and conventional treatment, according to the doctor, is that it takes less time for recovery. A patient can generally walk out of the hospital within 24 hours of the treatment.

Since being founded in 1982, the hospital

has grown across Korea and Asia. It now has six hospitals in Korea; two are in Seoul, two in Busan; one in Daegu and one in Pohang. There are also branches in Shanghai, Jakarta and Dubai.

Wooridul Spine Hospital saw the number of foreign patients rise 30 percent last year. In 2011, the Chungdam location had 1,193 foreign patients from 63 countries. The top five countries are China, the United States, Russia, Japan and Canada, respectively.

Over the last three years, about 1,700 foreign patients visited the hospital, 63.8 percent of which were referred by former patients, according to data provided by Wooridul Spine Hospital.

Several services make it an attractive choice for international patients. The International Patients Center has English, Japanese and Russian speaking staff.

"We also have a pick-up service from Incheon airport and 24-hour bilingual nursing services," said Lee, putting it in a league of its own in Korea.

Its free remote examination program has been popular among out-of-country patients. People send their MRI to Chungdam Wooridul via e-mail and the hospital will make a diagnosis for free.

The hospital prides itself on its humanitarian activities. Its doctors have participated in various volunteer missions around the globe, including to Brazil, Kazakhstan and Indonesia.

*"We also have a pick-up service from Incheon airport and 24-hour bilingual nursing services."*

— Dr. Jang Jee-soo,  
Wooridul Spine Hospital president



➤ Arumdaun Nara Dermatology & Plastic Surgery isn't just any plastic surgery clinic in Seoul. It's a pioneer. Doctors there were the first in Korea to introduce laser treatment for skin care.

"Around 10 years ago we introduced a laser procedure in Korea (for skin care)," said Dr. Lee Sang-jun, Arumdaun Nara founder and chairman. "We were the first. Before that, Koreans had to go under the knife to get a facelift – but since we introduced the laser treatment here, you don't have to have surgery any more. Since then it has become very popular in Korea."

"Now when most people want to get rid of wrinkles, they get laser treatment," he added.

"Arumdaun Nara" translates as "beautiful land." It opened the first branch in Myeongdong, Seoul, in 2000. The Gangnam branch opened its doors in January 2002. Since then, Arumdaun Nara has exploded in popularity, opening branches in Sinchon (May 2003), Jamsil (June 2004), Beijing (November 2004), and the Arumdaun Nara Obesity Center (May 2006).

Arumdaun Nara Dermatology & Plastic Surgery received the 2011 Ministry of Health and Welfare award for the second time since 2007. The award is given to hospitals in Korea that are the most-visited by foreign patients. It has received one other award from the ministry.

"So we are one of the most reliable practices in Korea. As evidence, we have received

many awards from the government," said Dr. Lee.

One of the reasons it is so popular among foreign patients is that it has Japanese, Chinese, English and Russian interpreters. "In order to make them feel at home we hire coordinators from their home country."

In 2009, over 2,000 foreign patients visited the hospital's Gangnam location. That number increased to 2,400 in 2010. Arumdaun Nara also prides itself as being the most visited hospital for Korean celebrities.

Foreign patients come from around the world and have particular demands. Chinese prefer plastic surgery, especially for the eyes and nose. Most Chinese patients are young. "We also have a great number of Chinese people who come for laser treatment," said Dr. Lee. Japanese prefer medical skin care and laser surgery – non-invasive techniques. Patients from Kazakhstan and Russia have peculiarities, too. They tend to want breast reductions, nose reductions and anti-aging laser treatment.

"But people come here for all kinds of reasons. Among medical tourists, they can be broken down into two groups: health and beauty," said Dr. Lee.

"In the last 10 years we have grown our name around the world," Dr. Lee said. "Our vision is that in 10 years we will be the biggest global clinic in Korea."

*"We are one of the most reliable practices in Korea. As evidence, we have received many awards from the government."*

— Dr. Lee Sang-jun,  
Arumdaun Nara founder and chairman

*"In the last 10 years we have grown our name around the world. Our vision is that in 10 years we will be the biggest global clinic in Korea."*

— Dr. Lee Sang-jun,  
Arumdaun Nara founder and chairman

## ARUMDAUN NARA DERMATOLOGY & PLASTIC SURGERY CENTER

### Arumdaun Nara Dermatology & Plastic Surgery

**Online:** <http://anaclienglish.com>

**E-mail:** [global@anacli.co.kr](mailto:global@anacli.co.kr)

**Phone:** (02) 3420-2250

**Directions:** Take line 2 to Gangnam Station; go out Exit 1; make a U-turn; walk for 10 seconds and Mijin Plaza Building is on your left side (SK network service center is on ground floor); they are on the 12th floor.





# CAPTURING KOREA

Buddhism

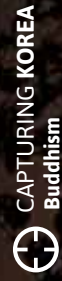
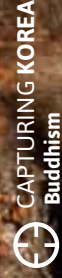
**Photos by** David Smeaton

**Interview by** Dylan Goldby

Everyone loves beautiful pictures. Groove Korea is teaming up with the Seoul Photo Club to give readers tips on where to get the best snaps on the peninsula. Our photographers will share tips on how and where they shoot. To compete in the Photo Challenge and win great prizes from Groove Korea, head on over to the Seoul Photo Club on Flickr

— [flickr.com/groups/seoulphotoclub](https://www.flickr.com/groups/seoulphotoclub)

**Buddha Statue - National Museum, Seoul**



**Watching Over The City - Bongeunsa, Seoul**





Mountain Buddha - Gakwonsa, Cheonan



Monk and Lanterns - Jeogyesa, Seoul





> David Smeaton, an Australian native, has been living in Korea for a decade.

He is the founder of the Seoul Photo Club and has written photo columns in the past for the Korea Herald and Groove Korea. Smeaton and his wife of two years recently had a son together. For this interview Smeaton discusses his love for Buddhism and some tips on where and how to shoot Buddhist sites in Korea.

**Give us a little background on yourself — the human side and the photographer side.**

In 20011 came to Korea. I've been here for 10 years and Korea rekindled my passion for photography. I've taken thousands of photos of this amazing country – from the 2002 World Cup, to Buddhist temples, to kids playing in fountains during hot summers.

I founded Seoul Photo Club in 2008. At the time, I was feeling jaded about photography and wanted to connect with others. The club really took off and became a great community. I'm proud to be a part of a group that has contributed so much to photography in Korea. I've been a photography columnist and judged photography competitions. I haven't held my own gallery yet, so that's something I hope to do in the future – I'd like to do a gallery contrasting my Korean photos with shots I've taken around the world.

I'm lucky enough to have two compatible hobbies – travel and photography. I've traveled to 45 countries and I had a camera in my hand the whole time. I have been to Everest Base Camp (5500 meters), all over Asia and Europe as well as the Middle East and parts of Africa. I've managed to collect some amazing experiences and photographs.

More recently I've found myself returning more and more to film photography. I bought a Hasselblad, my first medium format camera, and have enjoyed using it to capture a different view of Korea and Buddhism. The wonderful thing about Korea is film is cheap and easy to develop here. Cheungmuro is a film photographer's heaven!

**You're quite big on photography related to Buddhism; you even have a site dedicated to it. What got you into it, and why do you find it so fascinating?**

When I came to Korea I discovered Buddhism in a big way. The first temple I visited was Bongjeonsa near COEX. I was immediately enamored with Buddhism and I have a close affinity with Zen Buddhism, which I practice as much as possible. Being a photographer, it was a natural progression to start photographing temples and statues. Temples in Korea are so colorful and vibrant. Buddhism here is also very relaxed and calming.

The thing I love most nowadays is finding small temples tucked away on hilltops and on the sides of mountains. Temples are everywhere in Korea and it's often

the small, unknown ones which are the most wonderful.

As I traveled to other Asian countries I learned how diverse Buddhism is. Most of my Asian travel has centered around temple hopping and visiting Buddhist sites. I've experienced some amazing Buddhist culture all around Asia. My favorite Buddhist countries are Myanmar, Tibet and Korea.

My website is currently a gallery of my own Buddhist photography, but in the future I hope to expand it into a full Buddhism site with information about Buddhism and a discussion board. Buddhism has given me quite a lot, so I hope to give back as much as I can. Good karma!

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**“Most of my Asian travel has centered around temple hopping and visiting Buddhist sites. I've experienced some amazing Buddhist culture all around Asia. My favorite Buddhist countries are Burma, Tibet and Korea.”**

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**Do you have a favorite Buddhism-related place to photograph?**

In Korea, there are too many great places! I love Bul Guksa (Gyeongju) and Gakwon (Cheonan). Bongjeonsa (Seoul) and Beopjusa (North Chungcheong) are also amazing temples. My favorite time of the year is Buddha's birthday. Every temple has beautiful lanterns and the street festival is wonderful. The lantern parade is one of the most incredible things I've ever seen.

I really want to do a winter tour of Korea's temples because I've never had a chance to capture the beautiful temple scenes in the snow.

My taste for Buddhism photography has changed over time. At first I loved the golden statues and colorful temples. Then I started to become more interested in the monks and the monastic lifestyle. Nowadays I prefer small temples and places that get fewer visitors. I've also started writing stories about the monks and temples. It's fascinating to learn more about the people who dedicate their lives to Buddhism – and many temples have amazing histories.

**You have quite a few portraits of monks. Quite a few are candid, but others are not. Do you, and if so, how do you go about seeking permission to make this intimate entry into a person's life?**

I'm really passionate about photographing people. I think portraiture is a very beautiful and intimate form of photography. During my travels I had many opportunities to hone my skills when approaching people for

portraits. I think the best way to photograph people is build trust with them first. It's important to connect with your subject.

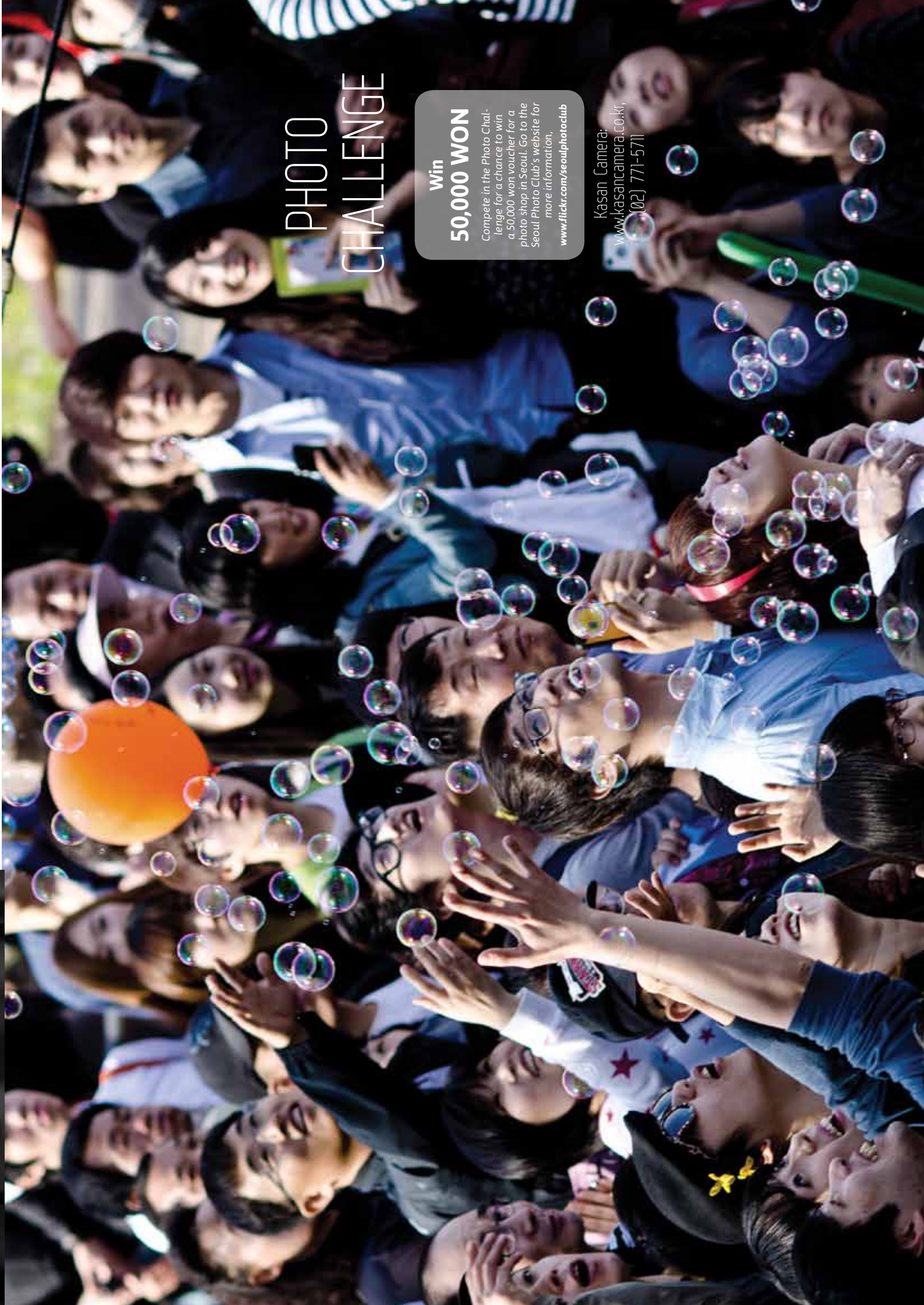
That's particularly true in Korea where many monks don't really like to be photographed. So I work on spending time at the temple, being respectful to the monks, and making them comfortable with my presence. When I feel ready, I'll lift my camera or give a gesture (often just a tilt of the head or shrug of the shoulders) and the monks will respond with a nod.

I've had a lot of success photographing Buddhism in Korea by showing an interest in Buddhist traditions and

**You're “stuck” in the world's greatest photographic opportunity; what is it, and what single piece of gear would you like to have with you?**

One thing I've never done in Korea is spend time photographing the young boys who live in Korean monasteries. Traditionally, boys who are orphans or abandoned would end up living in Buddhist temples under the care of monks. It's much less common these days, but there are still monasteries that care for young boys and raise them as monks. I see the kids every year at Buddha's Birthday celebrations, where I've been lucky enough to get a few shots, but I've never had the time to visit them and take more photos.

That would be my opportunity – a day of photography with some young monks. All I'd need is my D200 and 85mm lens. It's tempting to go for a wide lens to capture the kids at play, but I think I'd like to photograph their faces. 🙏



# PHOTO CHALLENGE

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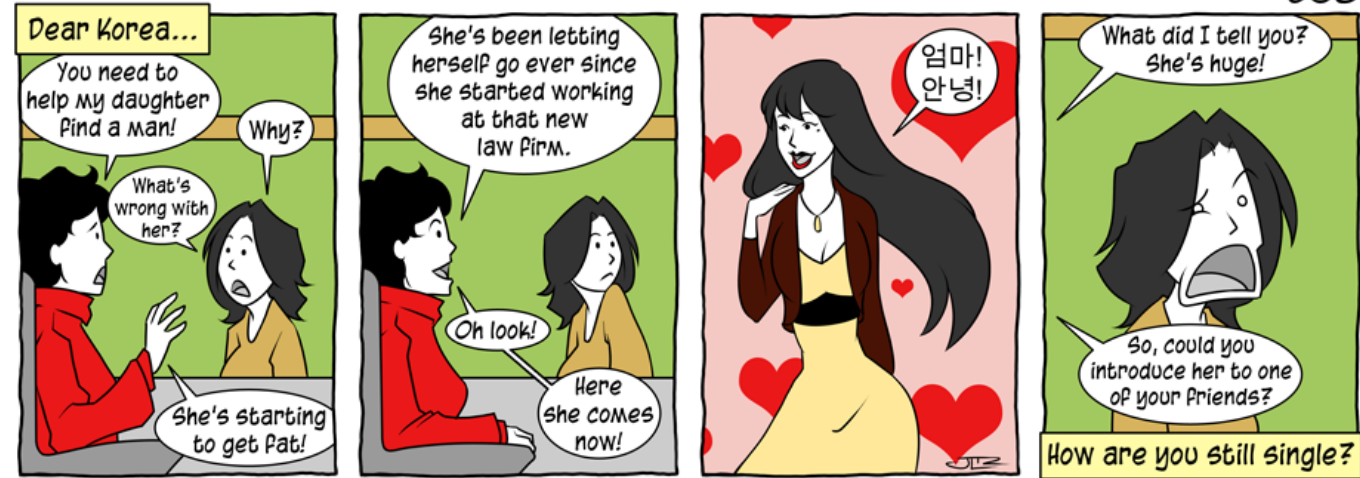
Compete in the Photo Challenge for a chance to win a 50,000 won voucher for a photo shop in Seoul. Go to the Seoul Photo Club's website for more information,  
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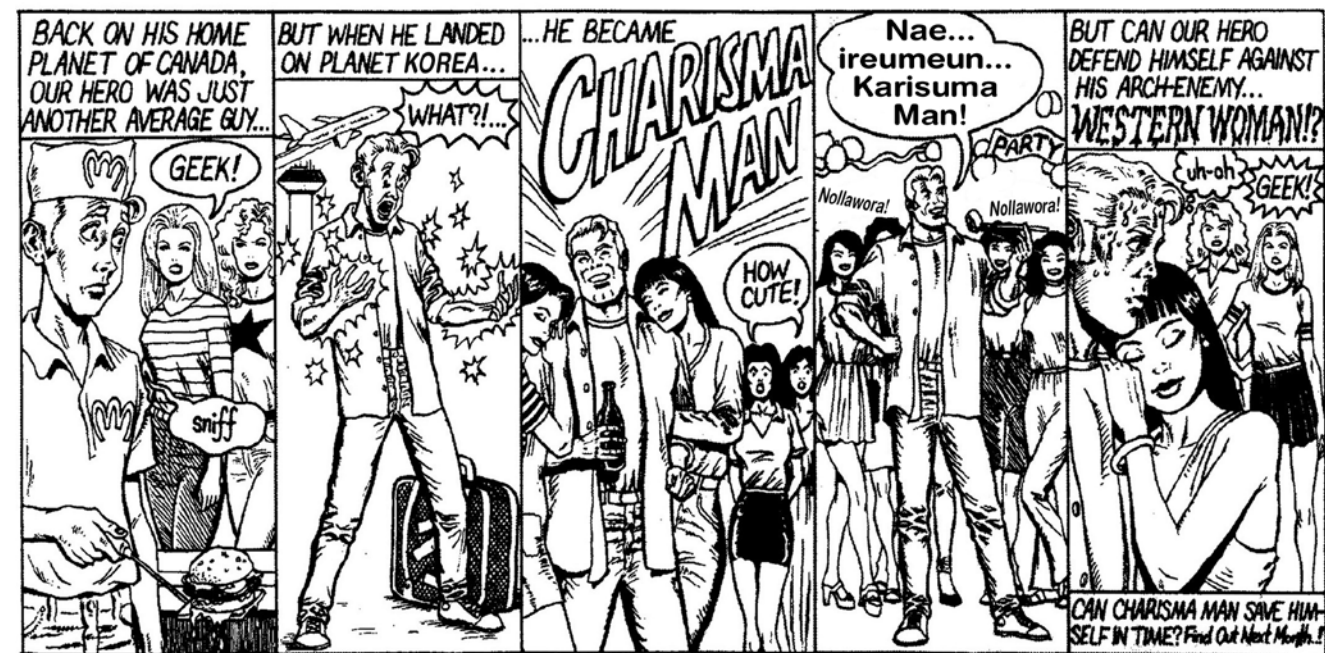
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## DEAR KOREA



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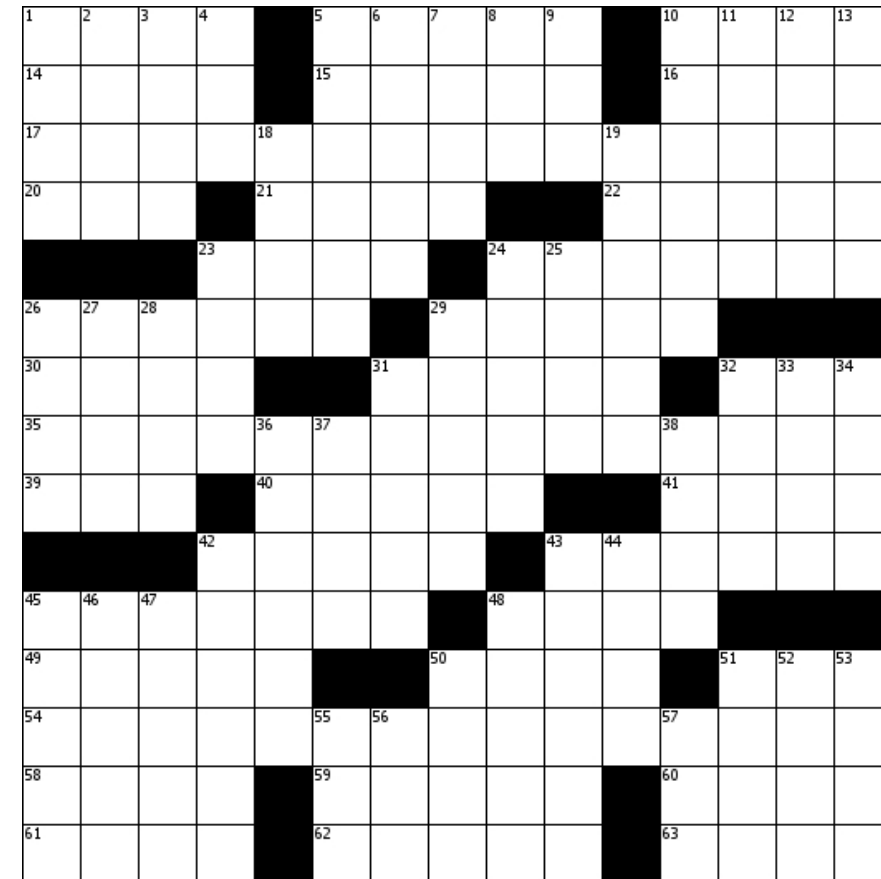
NOT REALLY A MATCHMAKER, JEN LEE



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## CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

1. Hit, as with a whip
5. Seagoing vessel
10. Arid
14. Bone near the elbow
15. High home
16. Cat's weapon
17. Big win, say
20. Frat party staple
21. Knitting need
22. External
23. Zilch
24. Is a nuisance to
26. Like two-digit number systems

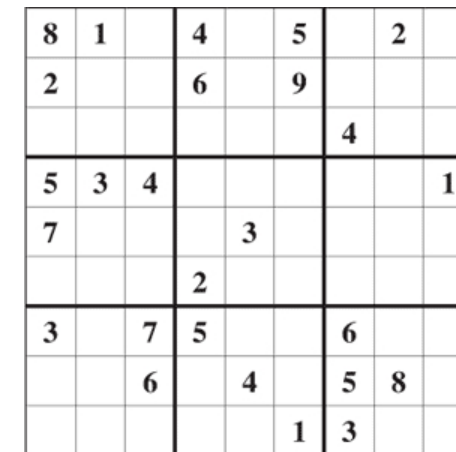
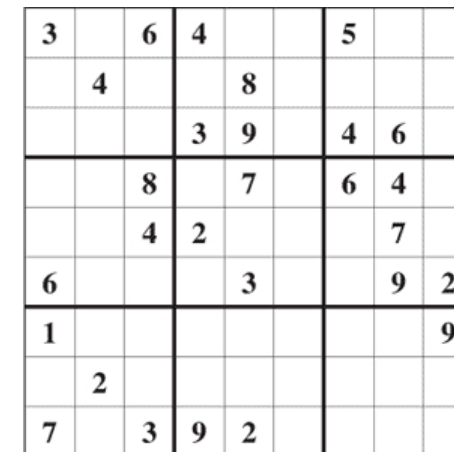
29. Male and female
30. Portent
31. Throat trouble
32. Like the Hatter
35. Democratic principle
39. Disgusted, with "up"
40. Mimics
41. Beer
42. Santiago is its capital
43. A little seasick, say
45. Red shade
48. Small and weak
49. XVII x IX
50. Tank contents

51. Free (of)
54. Painting that became an RCA symbol
58. Lawn problem
59. Available, as a flat
60. Commoner
61. Ending for neur-
62. Popular locks
63. Exam

### DOWN

1. Prepare for an ambush
2. Toward the sheltered side
3. Stocking ruiner
4. Owns
5. Household warbler
6. Nostalgically fashionable
7. Elvis \_\_\_ Presley
8. Pine family tree
9. Golf course area
10. Pack members
11. Upper crust
12. Soap Box Derby entrant
13. Wide-spouted pitchers
18. Court hearing
19. Noted Nez Percé chief
23. Author Grey
24. Pmt. coupon tear-off lines
25. COO, for one
26. Box office smash
27. Nagy of Hungary
28. Lack
29. Put away for later
31. Refine, as ore
32. Sorvino of "Mimic"
33. Winning cards
34. Like morning grass
36. Showy perennial
37. Mayberry lad
38. Follow orders
42. Felonies, e.g.
43. Knights' expeditions
44. Silver State inst.
45. Dumbbell
46. Advertising awards
47. Usher's beat
48. Blender button
50. Went down
51. Make angry
52. Sorbet relatives
53. Obligation
55. Porker's hangout
56. \_\_\_ man: unanimously
57. Choose

## SUDOKU



### HOW TO PLAY

Sudoku requires no calculation or arithmetic skills. It is essentially a game of placing numbers in squares, using very simple rules of logic and deduction.

### OBJECTIVE

The objective of the game is to fill all the blank squares in a game with the correct numbers. There are three very simple constraints to follow. In a 9 by 9 square Sudoku game:

- Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order.
- Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order.
- Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9.



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ENTERTAINMENT  
Horoscope



**Aries**

Now is the time to consider taking a break from your labors. Like many of your sign, you may have burned yourself out without once getting away for a few days of real rest. If you can manage to do so now, your health – and future productivity – would benefit immensely. There is a chance for romantic adventure in the offing.



**Taurus**

The knowledge you have in special areas has long been virtually wasted. Consider seriously taking advantage of your knowledge and your skills to make money for yourself for a change, instead of adding to the coffers of others. An old romance could be replaced by a torrid new one, but not at a cheap price.



**Gemini**

Academic pursuits and/or specialized learning activities bode well for you now. This could be a good time to take up studying that musical instrument you have been resolving to learn for many years. You could also run into some financial problems now, resulting from poor planning or unwise investments.



**Cancer**

Catch up with the world and try to stay out of dreamland. Your biggest fault is talking about grandiose plans and never getting off the dime to do something concrete about them. Your talents are virtually endless, but your love of ease and sloth can be your undoing. Expect a message from an old love concerning an important situation.



**Leo**

Upward and onward should be your battle cry now. Your abilities have never been tested so much as they are likely to be in a short time – but if you react with even one-tenth of your capability, you could rise to the top of the pack with scarcely a feather ruffled. Speak seriously with an employer or colleague about your situation.



**Virgo**

An interesting new romantic situation could open up for you at this point – and it may well be with someone you already know and least suspect. Correct behavior is important to you now, however, as many eyes are on you. If you are already in a mate situation – or if your new friend has commitments – it might be well to cool things for a time.



**Libra**

Playing things safe might seem the wiser course, but it won't bring that sweet knowledge of having stayed in the game to the end. Losing isn't the worst thing that could happen. It could seem far worse at a later date not to have tried at all. And the chances might just be about 50-50 that you could win.



**Scorpio**

Use every effort to get in touch with a close friend whom you have let slide into oblivion. There could be something truly amazing and exciting in it for you if you do. Social activities should be soft-pedaled for a while until you find out more about a certain situation. Keep your ears open for word of an important business transaction.



**Sagittarius**

Set up some intricate safeguards to protect you and your property, especially if you are dealing with a financial project of some size. Risking personal debt on an unproven project could bind you up for some time to come – but if it seems right, there is no reason why you shouldn't take a solid position with savings or personal leverage.



**Capricorn**

Try turning yourself around by making an honest effort to look at both sides of a situation before sounding off. There is an excellent chance for you to improve your present financial or career position, but you may have to take the bull by the horns and move as quickly as an Olympic sprinter to do so.



**Aquarius**

Stealing a kiss may seem like enormous fun at the time, but such simple pleasures could develop into big problems if the proper safeguards are not taken into consideration. Steer clear of fast-money schemes. In all likelihood, those who would recommend such action stand to make a great deal more than you.



**Pisces**

Strongly consider rewarding your co-workers for the successful completion of a project for which you have received the lion's share of credit. This could ensure future loyalty and it might take no more than a simple pat on the back, although something more concrete might not be amiss. Contemplate your romantic situation very carefully before you commit yourself.



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